



MIDDLE EAST DAILY BULLETIN

GÜNLÜK ORTADOĐU BÜLTENİ

Domestic Policy in the Middle East Countries

Bölge Ülkelerinde İç Siyaset

The Restructuring Procces of Iraq

Irak'ın Yeniden Yapılanma Süreci

Energy Security

Enerji Güvenliđi

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Ethnic and Secterian Groups

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1. IRAQ

- **MP: no signs for a meeting attended by Maliki, Barzani and Allawi.**



BAGHDAD / NINA / MP, for the state of law coalition, Hussein al-Asadi confirmed the absence of any signs for a meeting attended by Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki and Kurdish President Massoud Barzani, and the president of the Iraqiya List, Iyad Allawi.

He said in a statement to the National Iraqi News / NINA /: "The political process is currently in a state of calm, waiting for the return of President Jalal Talabani" stressing the need " that all the political blocs should be prepared to hold the national meeting after the return of Talabani."

He added: "The State of Law coalition believes that the best solution for the

political process is to hold the national meeting, brings together, all the political parties, to resolve the current crisis."

It is mentioned that some media, recently pointed out to a close meeting combined Nuri al-Maliki and the Kurdistan region president, Massoud Barzani and the president of Iraqiya List, Iyad Allawi.

http://www.ninanews.com/english/News_Details.asp?ar95_VQ=GDFGKF

- **Maliki's advisor: contacts with the Syrian opposition never stopped**

BAGHDAD / NINA / Ali al-Moussawi, the adviser of the Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki said that the government's contacts with the Syrian opposition is continuous and never stopped.

He said in a statement to the National Iraqi News Agency / NINA /: "the Syrian opposition has shown, more than once, its intention to visit Baghdad, and we welcome such visits," noting " the visit of the Syrian opposition to Baghdad will be at appropriate time."

Moussawi renew "Iraqi government's keenness to stop the bloodshed in Syria,

and resolve this matter internally away from any foreign interference."

It is mentioned that the Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki presented an initiative to resolve the Syrian crisis through its chairmanship of the Iraqi delegation at the Non-Aligned Summit held last week in Tehran.



The Syrian Foreign Minister Walid al-Moallem, told Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki on Friday 31,Sep that his government welcomes the Iraqi proposal to resolve the crisis in Syria.

Some media indicated that the Syrian National Council rejected the initiative of Iraq.

http://www.ninanews.com/english/News_Details.asp?ar95_VQ=GDFGJK

- **Kurdistani MP: Continuing political crises caused by hardening positions of blocs.**

BAGHDAD / NINA / MP, of the Kurdistan Islamic Union, Osama Jamil said that "the continuation of the political crisis is due to hardening of positions blocs" ruling out "to reach a solutions to the crisis in the coming period."



He told the National Iraqi News Agency / NINA /: "the failure to reach solutions to the crises will create an impression to the Iraqi people that the politicians are not able or willing to find solutions to the political crises."

Jamil called all political blocs to "quickly resolve the current crises through direct dialogue table, especially in the conjunction of the developments and repercussions of regional accelerated."

It is mentioned that the independent MP, Mahmud Othman said the political blocs waiting for the President for national meeting is an excuse to prolong the crisis in the absence of consensus among the blocs and political leaders.

http://www.ninanews.com/english/News_Details.asp?ar95_VQ=GDFGJH

- **MP: America secretly told their nationals to leave the Gulf region in preparation to strike Iran.**

Karbala / NINA / MP, Mohammed al-Hindawi, of the Islamic Fadhila (Virtue) Party revealed that the U.S informed its citizens secretly to leave the Gulf region in preparation to strike Iran.

Hindawi told the reporter of / NINA/ on Monday 3 Sep. that "America secretly called on its nationals to leave the Gulf region in the next October this year."

He added: "The reason behind this is to prepare to strike Iran's nuclear facilities, and to avoid its citizens from reprisals actions."

It is mentioned that "several news reports said that the United States and Israel are putting military plan to attack Iran's nuclear facilities via an air strike.

http://www.ninanews.com/english/News_Details.asp?ar95_VQ=GDFGIG

- **Jaafary, Kurdistan Change's delegation urge to develop common vision**

Baghdad (AIN) -The Head of the Iraqi National Alliance, Ibrahim al-Jaafary, recieved "A delegation of Kurdistan Change Movement involved the leader within the Movement, Azad Jalak, and MP Sardar Abdullah, and discussed with them a number of laws to be legislated in the next sessions of the Parliament."

A statement by the INA stressed that "The two sides also highlighted, in the meeting, the need to identify a common national vision to interact with best alternatives for achieving the public interest for the country."

http://www.alliraqnews.com/en/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=17669:jaafary-kurdistani-changes-

[delegation-urge-to-develop-common-vision&catid=35:political&Itemid=2](#)

- **Dori: passing General Amnesty law, first step towards proving good will**

Baghdad (AIN) -MP Itab al-Dori of the Iraqiya Slate stressed that "The vote on the General Amnesty law draft represents the first step towards proving the good wills and real desire for achieving the political reforms advocated by the political blocs."

She stated "The vote on the General Amnesty law is an urgent need especially that many innocent people are still live inside prisons unfairly and without committing offenses but they are the victims of the secrete informant,"

Dori invited "The political sides which call for conducting reforms to prove their good will through endorsing the Amnesty law,"

She stressed "Not to include in this law whoever committed crimes against the Iraqi people."

Dori urged "To cancel the Accountability and Justice Law as it creates animosity

among the people, noting that "Abolishing this law stands for the second step on road of constructing the country and achieving the national reconciliation."

http://www.alliraqnews.com/en/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=17671:dori-passing-general-amnesty-law-first-step-towards-proving-good-will&catid=35:political&Itemid=2

- **Campaign launched to assassinate all Mol officers of former regime, says Bolani**

Baghdad (AIN) –The former Minister of Interior, Jawad al-Bolani, revealed that "There is a campaign launched to assassinate all the officers within the Ministry of Interior who worked during the former regime and continued their jobs currently."

In a press statement issued on Sunday, he said "There are wide assassination crimes that target the Mol officers through silenced weapons."

"The former regime, Qaeda or other terrorist sides could be behind this campaign," he added.

It is worth mentioning that there are terrorist attacks target the Iraqi civilians and the security forces all over Iraq.

http://www.alliraqnews.com/en/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=17632:campaign-launched-to-assassinate-all-iom-officers-worked-during-former-regime-says-bolani-&catid=35:political&Itemid=2

- **Call to stop executing 200 persons in Iraq, Hashimi**

BAGHDAD/ Aswat al-Iraq: Vice-president Tariq al-Hashimi called the United Nations and international non-governmental organizations to interfere to stop executing 200 persons in Iraq, expressing readiness to leave Turkey if his stay stirred problems, according to Turkish TV station.

On TRT site, Hashimi, who was charged with terrorism in Iraq, spoke on Iraqi internal disturbances, but he "demanded UN and NGOs to prevent executions in the near future".

"Execution verdicts will be issued on 200 persons, but I believe that 150 were executed", he added.

Iraqi Justice Ministry, earlier, denied executing 200 persons who were convicted with capital punishment.

Iraqi Parliament is studying a general amnesty law, amid calls not to grant it to all "to defend the society and internal security".

http://en.aswataliraq.info/%28S%28goml5a451si3qx55ral15v45%29%29/Default1.aspx?page=article_page&id=150267&l=1

- **Abrogating capital punishment encourages terrorism, legal expert**

BAGHDAD/ Aswat al-Iraq: Legal expert Tariq Harb commented that the calls to abrogate capital punishment in Iraq will open the door wide open before terrorist attacks and criminal gangs inside the country.

He added that only ten crimes are punished with capital punishments, which are the worst of the crimes known against the society like terrorism, kidnapping and murder, while there are more serious crimes, like drugs trade, antiquities smuggling and anti-state crimes, are not punished.

"We cannot compare Iraqi conditions with the Europeans which cancelled the capital punishment, where there are no bomb blasts", he elaborated.

UN representation in Iraq (UNAMI) expressed its concern for new executions in Iraq, calling the Iraqi government to halt such verdicts.

Iraqi Parliament is studying a general amnesty law, amid calls not to grant it to all "to defend the society and internal security".

http://en.aswataliraq.info/%28S%28goml5a451si3qx55ral15v45%29%29/Default1.aspx?page=article_page&id=150265&l=1

- **Attacking security officers attempt to empty their organization**

Attacking security officers attempt to empty their organization

BAGHDAD/ Aswat al-Iraq: Iraqiya bloc MP Itab al-Douri regarded the continued attacks against security officers an attempt to empty their organization from efficient personnel "to be replaced by corrupt members that will lead to more

deterioration in the security situation in the country".

She added that terrorism wants to deliver a message that "the intelligence power is weak, so the ordinary citizen believes in the lack of security".

Douri called for drastic solution to counter this problem by granting full support to the security mechanism with modern arms and equipment.

On the other hand, she stressed necessity solving the security posts of interior and defence ministries, as well as popular support of security personnel.

http://en.aswataliraq.info/%28S%28goml5a451si3qx55ral15v45%29%29/Default1.aspx?page=article_page&id=150263&l=1

- **Syria welcomes Iraqi initiative, Mu'alim**

BAGHDAD/ Aswat al-Iraq: Syrian deputy premier and foreign minister Waleed al-Mu'alim welcomed Iraqi initiative to form a contact committee of non-aligned countries to solve the Syrian crisis.

Syrian official news agency reported that Mu'alim and Premier Nouri al-Maliki and their discussions were positive.

On the other hand, Dr.

Faisal al-Miqdad, Syrian deputy premier, described Turkish stand as "destructive" for it started to train terrorists and provide a safe way to Qaeda organization into Syrian territories.

"This stand contradicts the Turkish people's stand, which should be re-considered", he added.

http://en.aswataliraq.info/%28S%28goml5a451si3qx55ral15v45%29%29/Default1.aspx?page=article_page&id=150261&l=1

- **Acceptance of Iraqi initiative confirms it is international status**

Acceptance of Iraqi initiative confirms it is international status

BAGHDAD/ Aswat al-Iraq: White Iraqiya bloc regarded the welcoming of Syria and Iran with Iraqi initiative on the Syrian crisis confirms it is Arab and international status.

In a statement by the bloc, Secretary General Jamal al-Bateekh said today that Iraq is obliged to make new initiatives due to his new international status, "so, it has to propose a solution to the Syrian crisis".

Syrian foreign minister Waleed al-Mu'alim informed yesterday Premier Nouri al-Maliki that his government welcomed the Iraqi proposal to solve the Syrian question.

http://en.aswataliraq.info/%28S%28goml5a451si3qx55ral15v45%29%29/Default1.aspx?page=article_page&id=150259&l=1

- **The Constitution and the parliamentary system.. Did they achieve the ambitions of the Iraqis?**

Karim Alsayyid / A few months and we will finish our first decade in the new Iraq. An Iraq that finally got rid of the rule of the individual, family, and became wide open in front of everyone; the devout and rogues, thieves and corrupt and atheists and rebellious and the kneelings prostrates !

This people is a tenant of this nation, lessor (the ruler) bound it with nodal and arbitrary conditions. Iraq was belonging purely to the leader of necessity and

champion the Glorious Revolution, everything was to him alone, yes alone, Saddam River, Saddam bridge, Saddam neighborhood, Saddam University, Feda'iyeen, Saddam City Saddam's birthday and even Saddam religion! Saddam and everything was in Saddam and nothing but Saddam.

Dictatorial regime was a presidential system and the authorities met under the mind of the leader and under the mantle of the revolution and the Revolutionary Court and the Revolutionary Command Council . When you ask about the title of the thing called the constitution the Iraqi would say: Did we know how to talk before knowing the Constitution?!

We can say that the Constitution of the new Iraq was launched from those historical events of the new Iraq rulers since the date of the referendum of the people on the Constitution of the Republic of Iraq in 2005, considering that the U.S. civil governor and transitional governments did not come from the people of were chosen by the Iraqis themselves.

The Constitution is the highest document of the country . it transcends all laws and regulations and agreements showing shape of the state and the system of government authorities and public rights and freedoms of individuals and the way of the state administration. It is the authority and the decisive criterion for every difference and deviation from the line lay down in advance for the state administration.

The birth of our Constitution was an arduous caesarean .The most important in it was the live of the newborn regardless of diseases and congenital malformations. There was no existence except with the life of . So the politicians and the ambitious and some intellectuals on the ratification of the constitution and the birth of the state together, but the diseases and deformities accompanied the newborn constitution and still has since the birth until the first decade, which will end soon. Did not the time of treatment come?

Yes, the Iraqis problem began when they have chosen the solution by their own hands, the Constitution because its defects still confuse this process day after

day and its weak points still are many. The most important of these defects is the issue of the form of government and the regime.

Article (1) of the Iraqi Constitution provides for the following: (the Republic of Iraq is a federal state and one independent, fully sovereign, the system of government is republican, representative (parliamentary) democracy, and this constitution is a guarantor of the unity of Iraq).

The democratic Parliamentary regime is an excellent regime that was born from the womb of the peoples suffering and their struggle for freedom and justice and many countries follow it in order to reach their goals and objectives, especially with multi-national, religious and political society with the existence of an aware and conscious people of the events and the presence of politically sophisticated and able elite to win the confidence of voters through the credibility of the act and work, and the living example of that is the United Kingdom.

This system does not suit the Iraqi reality with special nature and the Iraqi people

did not have extensive experience about such experience, because the Iraqis did not see an electoral box or political competition and equal representation and legitimacy since it has been known as the great people of Iraq!

Iraq got rid of the scourge of Saddam Hussein believing that it got rid of the unjust and dictatorial presidential system, but the fact that Saddam was not following a presidential and realistic system as is the case in the United States, for example. So that does not make us to be able to judge that the presidential system does not fit Iraq as a system of governance.

Those who are afraid of the presidential system are unanimous that it creates a new dictatorship, and that "man does not let to be bitten from a hole twice!", This opinion is acceptable within the limits of political theorizing but actually it is not so, and the evidence of this for the current Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki who got (622.961) votes and Iyad Allawi got (407.537) votes in their electoral circuit Baghdad, and the third Osama Najafi got (244 000), and this gives us an important indicator that the direction of the Iraqi

personal voter, is subjective not objective and the reason is due to the nature of the Iraqi social nature according to the national and religious visions of ethnicity . Actually Arab and Islamic nation and Iraqi nation specifically are interested in person before content.

Our experience with the democratic system left us political rivalries and enticements that preoccupied the Iraqi politician from doing his actual duty to provide services and economic sophistication, while the executive governments that emerged from this system were political quota governments and that we do not see it is serving the Iraqi reality that is thirsty for Reconstruction and advancement after deprivation that has been lasted for years.

Chief Executive (Prime Minister) is forced to make concessions to make adjustments by forming a government that will make the ministries as a purely property and small states to the blocs which will occupy their offices and shares. By that, we will make passable road for one of the financial and administrative corruption.

The responsibility towards the deterioration of services and popular demands is placed upon the Prime Minister alone, while we find that the government is not a majority political government, but it's a mixture of the winning blocs and thus , everybody will bear the responsibility, and here we will have a new problem because the collective responsibility cannot rebuild the destruction of Malta! . The blocs will live failure among themselves, and that is something that does not serve the citizen first and foremost. There will be also be a state of mutual interests and media weapons to disclose the Corruption through the threats between the blocs So they either to be silent all or to declare cold media war between them.

The presidential system assigns responsibility for the executive president and makes him to be in front of popular demands, with constrained Council of representatives who are legislative representatives of all people and this is what we find in line with the Iraqi street. The duty of the parliament will be controlling the government and its accountability for any failure and the opportunity of the Prime Minister for

making accounting and changing will be more than the pressure of the political blocs and the president can choose national and efficient figures rather than political figures imposed on him by (quotas) which is closest to reality and reason and logic.

In Conclusion: the parliamentary system currently used in Iraq is a system that does not suit the Iraqi pluralism and social, political nature and its continuance will increase its gaps days after days, and the remaining of this system does not serve making civil state with equal rights and duties . The Prime Minister will be constrained including being dictated with the will of the political blocs not the will of the people.

<http://www.shafaq.com/en/articles/343-1-the-constitution-and-the-parliamentary-system-did-they-achieve-the-ambitions-of-the-iraqis.html>

- **Parliament cancels recent appointments of the Ministry of Education**

Shafaq News / The Education Commission in the parliament announced on Sunday, voting by majority to cancel appointments

made by the Ministry of Education recently, pointing out to the presence of corruption in school buildings projects.



The member of the Parliamentary Education Committee, Kathem al-Sayadi said in a news conference attended by "Shafaq News" that "the appointments process is being done by paying bribes to close people to the Office of the Minister of Education to appoint graduates of colleges that have nothing to do with education."

Sayadi pointed out that " his committee has more than an evidence of the presence of corruption in the ministry in the school building projects and there are more than a thousand school ramshackle referred to the companies in the Ministry of Housing since long time and have been implemented so far."

Sayadi called "al-Iraqiya List to replace the Minister of Education," waving "if al-Iraqi list do not replace him, we will collect signatures in the parliament to question him as a prelude to his dismissal."

The independent MP and member of the Parliamentary Education Committee, Kathem Sayadi had announced, on Saturday suspending his membership in the committee, attributing the reasons for the suspension to the rampant corruption in the Ministry of Education, especially in the minister's office, and specifically in the recent issue of appointments launched by the ministry.

The Ministry of Education has launched 15 thousand jobs degrees last March and gave the priority for the English language, mathematics, physics, and Islamic education degrees, while announced the names of the admitted students from them last August.

<http://www.shafaq.com/en/news/3430-parliament-cancels-recent-appointments-of-the-ministry-of-education.html>

- **Presidency of Nineveh Court: Judges included in de-Ba'athification procedure continue working**

Shafaq News / President of the Nineveh Court revealed on Sunday, the continuation of thirty judges surveyed with the de-Ba'athification resolution issued by the Justice and Accountability Commission to work in the court, noting that these judges have appealed the decision issued against them.

An official source in Nineveh province revealed on Friday, for "Shafaq News" that "the presidency of the Court has received an appeal to from the justice and Accountability Commission that includes suspending the work of 30 workers in the presidency of the Appeal Court of Nineveh.



The head of Nineveh judiciary Court , Salem al-Badrani said in an interview with "Shafaq News" that "the judges included

in de-Ba'athification procedures are still working at the present time," considering "the decision of the justice and accountability commission to include those judges with de-Ba'athification procedures in Nineveh as a clear and consistent evidence on the direct targeting of the provincial council in order to empty it from the judicial competencies known with their integrity in their work".

"we demand the federal government with the decision of national reconciliation; this de-Ba'athification procedure comes as a challenge for the judges of Nineveh," noting that "this decision does not serve the national reconciliation project adopted by political entities at all".

"Five judges who were former members Baath party as well as and 26 others were among the included names with this decision."

Badrani has announced that "the judges have submitted on Saturday, their objections to the appeals discrimination board after allowing to submit the names to the Integrity Committee in the Iraqi parliament."

governor of Nineveh , Ethel al-Nujaifi has considered last Friday, the decision of the justice and accountability commission to include more than 30 judges in Nineveh with the de-Ba'athification procedure as "illegal" and targeting to specific areas, demanding that the three authorities to take a stand against this issue.

Al-Iraqiya coalition led by former Prime Minister, Iyad Allawi has denounced on Saturday, the decision of the accountability and justice commission against 30 judges on charges of the former belonging to the outlawed Baath party.

<http://www.shafaaq.com/en/news/3428-presidency-of-nineveh-court-judges-included-in-de-baathification-procedure-continue-working-.html>

- **Iraq Resumes Oil Export Through Turkish Ceyhan Port**

KIRKUK, Kurdistan Region—Oil exports from the Iraqi city of Kirkuk to the Turkish Ceyhan port resumed on Friday after a three-day failure caused by technical problems in the pipeline network.

A source from Iraq's North Oil Company told al-Sumariya News that within a few

hours the amount of exported oil to the Turkish port would again reach 400,000 barrels per day.

Kirkuk is one of Iraq's main oil production centers and is home to one of the largest oil reserves in the world.

The Iraqi government has exported oil from Kirkuk since 1920s.

The ethnically diverse province of Kirkuk is the center of dispute between Kurds and the federal government in Baghdad. Both sides claim the right to control the province.

<http://www.rudaw.net/english/news/iraq/5129.html>

- **Muhammed Ihsan: Iraqi PM Does not Want Article 140 Implemented**

KIRKUK, Kurdistan Region -- A Kurdish representative in the Article 140 committee claims that the delay in implementing the article is a pressure card being used by Iraqi Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki.

However, another member of the committee describes the delay as simply a result of "carelessness."

After the fall of Saddam Hussein in 2003, 43 percent of areas historically claimed by Kurds were considered "disputed" and tied to Article 140 in the constitution. Article 140 was to have been implemented by the end of 2007, after a three-step process -- normalization, census and referendum.

But the first step, which includes compensating displaced people and sending the Arab population back to their places of origin, has not even been completed.

The committee recently published its fifth report, which included statistics on the compensation of refugees. The report says that 509,986 compensation forms were issued to families displaced during the former regime (refugees), and 33,168 forms were distributed to families who were brought from southern Iraqi cities to replace the forcefully moved families (imported families).

So far, 12,672 compensation checks have been issued to the imported families, and 74,806 checks to the refugees. The committee has received 15,775 new applications from the imported families and 272,860 applications from refugees.

In Kirkuk, home to the largest number of Article 140 families, 100,000 forms have been distributed to refugees and 30,000 forms to imported families; 11,262 compensation checks have been given to imported families, and 34,822 checks to refugee families.

According to the fifth report, in 2009 the Iraqi government allocated 22.8 billion Iraqi dinars for the implementation of Article 140. However, after expanding the works of the committee and opening five new offices, the amount is now 172 billion Iraqi dinars.

(Dr. Muhammed Ihsan)

Dr. Muhammed Ihsan, the representative for the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) in the Article 140 Committee, told Rudaw, “We asked for 600 billion Iraqi dinars for the current year, but they only allocated the abovementioned sum.”

He added, “I personally went to parliament three times and presented them with all the data, but they did not increase the amount.”

Ihsan explains why the article’s budget has been reduced. “The budget of the article is regulated by the Iraqi prime minister’s office,” he said. “The continued reduction of the budget shows that the Iraqi prime minister does not want the article to be implemented.”

Tahseen Kahiya, a member of the Article 140 committee representing the Turkmen, believes the article cannot be implemented with such a small budget.

“The article is very important. It affects the lives of thousands of families, yet the article does not have a special budget. We need a special budget allocated to this article,” he says.

Regarding the possibility of authorizing his committee to operate independently like many other institutions and government agencies, Kahiya says, “There are many agencies that do less and easier work than ours.”

However, Kahiya believes it would not be easy to make the committee run independently because of the amount of legislation that would be required, yet added “parliament could allocate a special budget.”



The committee’s report indicated that the presidencies of Iraq, the Council of Ministers and parliament have not carried out their responsibilities. For example, the Council of Ministers had one of the most important tasks -- to expedite the annulment of decisions of the abolished Revolution Leadership Council.

Kahiya says the council sent the annulment proposal in January to the State Shura Council, who delayed the process.

However, Ihsan said, “Maliki does not want to implement Article 140. He always

has some pretext. He promises to implement it, but then creates an obstacle for it somewhere else.”

He added, “In Baghdad, lying has become normal. The State Shura Council redrafts laws and compares them to other laws, but this particular article has been stuck there.”

Ihsan told Rudaw that he has met with the State Shura Council three times to discuss the implementation of the article. The council promised him each time that they would pass the article, but have not sent it back to the government yet.

“The article has been politicized. Maliki does not implement the article in order to win the hearts of some of the Arab parties,” Ihsan said.

According to Kahiya, the delay in implementation is merely a matter of “carelessness.”

“The committee deals with the people from all Iraqi provinces,” he says. “People in all Iraqi provinces demand to be included in the article’s benefits. That is

probably why the article has been delayed.”

“Many parliament members ask us to include certain areas in Article 140,” Kahiya explains, saying that the committee has only met with Iraqi Parliament once. “Or sometimes they send us special requests. That is why we have decided to accept no requests unless channeled to us through the parliament speakership.”

Ihsan also criticized some of the members of parliament, saying, “Most parliament members contact us merely to find out if compensation checks for their relatives have arrived or not!”

The fifth report also directed requests to Iraqi Parliament, including approving the annulment of decisions of the Revolution Leadership Council, increasing the allocated budget for the implementation of Article 140 and discussing a proposal forwarded by the Iraqi presidency that addresses jurisdiction issues of the disputed areas.

<http://www.rudaw.net/english/news/iraq/5071.html>

- **Maliki Angers Kurdish Leaders by Accusing Them of “Smuggling Oil”**

ERBIL, Kurdistan Region -- At Iraq’s Council of Ministers meeting last week, Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki accused the Kurdistan Region of “smuggling oil.”

The accusation caused a stir and Maliki’s Kurdish deputy, Dr. Roj Nuri Shawais, issued a strong reply.

Deputy Prime Minister Shawais told the PM that “accusing Kurdistan of ‘smuggling’ is not acceptable anymore. What the Kurds have done is within the boundaries of law. There isn’t a law for oil and gas in Iraq and so these problems are yet to be solved. Kurdistan cannot wait until Iraqi Parliament accepts such a law.”

The deputy was referring to parliament’s inability to pass the country’s oil and gas law, although a draft bill was proposed six years ago. The lack of regulation has led to tensions between the two governments as the Kurdistan Region has been exporting its natural resources instead of waiting for Iraqi Parliament to pass a law.

Iraq’s Minister of Trade Khairallah Hassan Babaker who attended the meeting said,

“Maliki brought up the topic for debate without the ministers’ knowledge because the agenda was not sent to the ministers before the meeting. They brought some files in regarding Kurdistan’s oil exportation and gave them to the ministers to read there and then and that became top of the agenda at the meeting.”

According to Babaker, the Minister of Oil told the meeting, “Iraq’s budget policy has to be implemented properly. Oil products in any region or city of Iraq have to be exported and controlled by the central government by law. And, according to the law, the Kurdistan Region has ‘smuggled’ oil to Iran and Turkey. Moreover, the revenues have not legally returned to the central government’s budget. That in essence, has led to \$8 billion damage to the budget of Iraq.”

Last week, Taner Yildiz, the Turkish Minister of Energy, officially announced that Kurdistan’s crude oil is transferred to Turkey to be refined and then returned to Kurdistan. The Turkish minister said that only five to 10 oil trucks enter Turkey’s oil refineries a day, but there are plans to escalate that number to 100 to 200.

Yildiz also confirmed that Turkey has plans to buy gas from the Kurdistan Region which has deepened tensions between Baghdad and Erbil.

At the Council of Ministers meeting, the Minister of Oil asked for the budget of Kurdistan to be cut by \$8 billion to fill the gap that the region’s oil exportation has made in Iraq’s budget.

Babaker said that the Kurdish ministers present, including the deputy prime minister, reacted critically to the accusation and the fact that the topic was introduced without the ministers being told in advance that it would be debated.

“You cannot just bypass such an important issue involving \$8 billion in 10 minutes,” Babaker said, adding that several Arab ministers also sided with the Kurds, including Minister of Transport Hadi al-Amiri and Minister of Finance Rafi al-Issawi who suggested the meeting be delayed.

According to Babaker, Maliki did not agree to delay the meeting and instead enlisted two audit committees to inspect the

finances of Kurdistan's Ministry of Natural Resources.

"All the Kurdish ministers refused to sign the proposal to set up those audit committees, however the Kurds are a minority [in Iraqi Parliament] and the majority passed it, although it was Maliki's decision alone," he said.

It was the first time Maliki accused Kurdistan of "smuggling" in a Council of Ministers meeting, Babaker said.

According to Kurdish leaders, at a 2006 summit attended by Zalmay Khalilzad, then U.S ambassador to Iraq, Iraqi political representatives agreed that if parliament was unable to pass an oil and gas law, each region could export their natural resources at their discretion.

Asim Jihad, spokesperson for the Ministry of Oil, told Rudaw that they will officially announce their stance on Kurdistan's oil exportation as soon as they receive the committee reports.

Farhad Atroshi, a member of the Oil and Gas Committee in Iraqi Parliament, said, "The KRG announced many times that if

the Iraqi government undermined the constitution, they would have to look for other avenues. Sending oil to Turkey is one of those avenues."

A law specialist, Atroshi added, "It seems like the Iraqi government, especially Hussain al-Shahristani, does not want the oil and gas law to be passed so they can continue to create obstacles for Kurdistan. Otherwise, Kurdistan's oil exportation and the unreturned revenues are not unconstitutional."

According to Article 111 of the Iraqi constitution, oil and gas are the property of all Iraqis. And Article 112 states that the federal government can undertake the management of oil and gas provided it distributes its revenues in a fair manner to all parts of the country.

"If the Iraqi government undermines the constitution and does not provide a share for the Kurds, then Kurdistan has every right by law and the constitution to export its own oil," Atroshi said.

However Bayazid Hassan, a member of the Change Movement (Gorran) and also part of the Oil and Gas Committee, told

Rudaw that Kurdistan needs to make the Iraqi government aware of its exportation.

“The constitution does not state who has the right to sell oil and it does not mention that Kurdistan has the right to export oil without permission from the central government,” he said.

Hassan added, “A law is needed to regulate who can or can’t sell oil to the outside world. Also, mutual agreements are needed between the KRG and the Iraqi government.”

KRG Prime Minister Nerichivan Barzani has said that, according to the Iraqi constitution, the Kurdistan Region has a share of 17 percent in the total 700,000 barrels of oil – or 140,000 barrels -- excavated per day from the Beji and Dora regions. However, the Iraqi government has only sent 15,000 barrels of oil since May, which Barzani said is not enough for the necessities of the region, such as electricity.

Barzani added that this is unconstitutional and that Kurdistan will do whatever possible in accordance with the

constitution to provide its people with the appropriate necessities.

According to a press release published by the Iraqi president’s office, Shahrstani promised President Talabani that he would not cut the 35,000 barrels of oil for Kurdistan per month, yet did not honor this promise.

Uday Awad, a member of the Sadr Movement in Iraqi Parliament, said, “Cutting the fuel share of Kurdistan is unconstitutional,” adding that such a decision “must face legal questioning because the Kurdistan Region has the right to receive its share of the wealth like every other region of Iraq.”

Awad also disclosed that Shahrstani, deputy prime minister for energy affairs, has been asked “to attend parliament so he can be questioned regarding the Erbil-Baghdad conflict over oil and gas, so a solution can be found to the problem.”

Fazil Nabi, a representative of the Ministry of Finance, told Rudaw that several weeks ago Shahrstani sent the ministry an official request to cut the Kurdistan Region’s budget by \$5 billion due to the amount of

oil revenue he believed had not been sent to the Iraqi government.

“But we did not process it,” Nabi said, adding that the request was forwarded to the Council of Ministers.

Nabi suggested that if the request had been put in place “it would be a lot harder to find a solution to the problem because it would further deepen the crisis.”

Imad Ahmed, deputy prime minister of the KRG, said, “We want to solve the problem through dialogue, but if that \$5 billion is cut, it would not benefit the political climate in Iraq as every action has a reaction and consequences.”

According to Atroshi, a commission from within the Oil and Gas Committee will visit the Kurdistan Region and meet with Ashti Hawrami, the region’s Minister of Natural Resources, to discuss the core problems between Erbil and Baghdad.

Ali Zari, deputy director of the Oil and Gas Committee, added, “We will visit the Kurdistan Region next week to look into the problems and the contracts the KRG

has signed so we can find a solution to the problem.”

<http://www.rudaw.net/english/news/iraq/4963.html>

- **Debate in Kirkuk about appointments in Education Ministry**

KIRKUK, Sept. 2 (AKnews) - The recent decisions of the Ministry of Education to halt the appointments adopted in Kirkuk province after being rejected by the management and the council of the province led to debate among the representatives of Kirkuk's Arabs.

Last Thursday Kirkuk province accused the Minister of Education Mohammed Tamim of nationality bias at the expense of Kurds, Turkmen and others in the city in the appointments of his ministry.

The governor of Kirkuk Najmeddine Karim announced that the Iraqi Education Ministry decided to stop the appointments in the province after being rejected by the management and the council of Kirkuk.

The Arabic political council in Kirkuk issued a statement in which it threatened

to cancel the decision to stop the appointments through Arab mass mobilization while the Iraqiya coalition in Kirkuk headed by Mazen Abdul-Jabbar Abu Galal issued another statement in which he said that the cancellation of the Ministry of Education of the appointments indicated the lack of a deliberate plan that meets the aspirations of all parties in Kirkuk.

The Arab Political Council assured in its statement that the appointments of the Ministry of Education are based on a plan prepared by the Directorate of Education in Kirkuk and according to its need for cadres in the public schools in the province.

"The schools in southern and western areas of Kirkuk of Arab-majority reached their worst level in terms of the lack of teaching staff while the schools of other nationalities include all required cadres.'

The political council demanded decision-makers in Kirkuk to work to repeal this decision or else face a democratic popular mass to prevent passing any appointments that marginalize Arabs, according to the statement.

Head of the National Accord Movement and the Iraqiya coalition in Kirkuk Mazen Abdul-Jabbar Abu Galal issued a statement saying: "The new appointments announced by the Ministry of Education in Kirkuk and then declining from these appointments confirmed the lack of serious study that did not take into consideration the interests and rights of our people in kirkuk province.

"The Iraqiya list demands all ministries and local government in Kirkuk to work to achieve equality among all the people in the province away from marginalization and injustice and assures on the need for coordination among all parties in this regard according to the constitution.

The statement from Iraqiya coalition in Kirkuk warned of "exploiting the issue of appointments for narrow political and personal interests away from the higher interest, especially after observing the posters lifted in the test halls for the Minister of Education and hope it will be lifted in order to keep our educational institutions away from politicization and narrow interests."

<http://www.aknews.com/en/aknews/3/324349/>

- **Explosion kills 3 in Kirkuk**

2 policemen were and another one was wounded on Sunday, September 2, when an explosive charge went off in al- Wasti quarter in the City of Kirkuk, a security source informed PUKmedia.

The victims were members in Kirkuk Emergency Police, he added.

<http://pukmedia.co/english/index.php/77/kurdistan-region/2233-explosion-kills-3-in-kirkuk>

- **Diyala confirms contamination of water coming from Iran**

DIYALA, Sept. 2 (AKnews) - The administration of Mandali area in Diyala province said its water sources coming from Iran through the Harran bordering valley are contaminated and contain medical remnants from one of the hospitals from Somar district, causing an extensive crisis in drinking water.

The chairman of the local council Azad Hamid Shafi said the water coming from

Harran (Kinkar) enters and accumulates in Mandali Dam and reaches the drinking water, dam which is the only source of drinking water in the area.

The deputy chairman of Mandali Council Raed Mandalawi said the water of the dam is completely contaminated and it is not suitable for various uses as the Water Directorate of Diyala confirmed.

Mandalawi added that the water of Mandali dam includes remnants and has a bad smell.

"The Iranian side refused Mandali's request to rehabilitate and clean bordering water in Kinkar valley because of the presence of mines and security risks (according to the Iranian side) pointing out that the water sources are neglected,

Diyala depends on 75 percent of the water of Diyala River, while the areas of the province depend on the Aser project of Tigris River in the Khalis town and other water resources in the valleys of Gazzaniah and Wand River in addition to the spring water in the Sheikh Bab valley in Jalawla.

<http://www.aknews.com/en/aknews/3/324350/>

- **Why Kurds feel anxious about the armament of the Iraqi army forces?**

by :Azad Jindyani

Translated by: Hogr Muhammad, Soran Amin

Kurdish people in Iraqi Kurdistan always feel worried about the Iraqi government's attempts to arm its military forces. This is because the Iraqi army since its inception in the twenties of the last century has been in fight against Kurds. The Iraqi army, first organised as one regiment known as al-Kadhim, were deployed to Sulaimani city against the revolution of Sheikh Mahmud Hafid in 1924 so as to intimidate Kurds and then settled in the area. Topping the Iraqi army's crimes committed against Kurds was the utterly heinous campaigns of Anfal and Halabja.

Whenever the above issue is ever since talked about, as it is the case today concerning the Iraqi government's attempts to purchase the military aircrafts 'Phantoms', not only the political elite, but also the public in the Kurdistan Region

have doubt about these moves. Such concerns have come at a time when neither Kurds have been marginalized in Iraq, nor has the current country's political system been set on the principle of oppression. Thus, it is worth asking why Kurds still have such fear about their future in the new Iraq. One may wonder Kurds' fear is inherent either in the old tragic memories the Kurdish people experienced with this army in the last decades, or some other factors may lead to such concerns.

In fact, the Kurdish partners in power-sharing government of Iraq should ask themselves these questions in order to find out the actual reason behind the fear experienced by Kurds about the armament of the Iraqi army. At the same time, our worthy role in the Kurdistan Region is to help our friends and partners in Iraq to reveal the real cause of this fear. The following are the expected reasons that led to the concerns of Kurds regarding the Iraqi army's armament:

Kurds still have not been certain about their status and future in the new Iraq due to increasing conflicts between Baghdad and the Kurdistan region. Further, they

realize that Iraqi government has recently made many unfriendly and gloomy atmospheres in the region in which its army has not been neutral. Instead it has been used by Baghdad to put pressure on the Kurdistan Regions regarding its underlying political agenda.

Another cause of Kurds' fear relates to Iraqi government's setting aside the question of the disputed territories between Baghdad and Erbil and taking no necessary measures to address the issue according to the constitution. Meanwhile, the resent military movements of the Iraqi army and its frequent deployment in the disputed areas have raised a reasonable doubt that Iraq aims to avoid dealing with the pending issues peacefully. Therefore, Kurds, in general, see Iraq's doubtful moves as an intended plane to delay resolving the issue of disputed areas until the balance of power shifts towards Baghdad's interests. Since then, Iraq would be more powerful in terms of military, economy and diplomacy than the Kurdistan Region to eventually disappear the case altogether. What frightens the Kurds has been the possible deterioration of the relations between Kurds and Iraq

again and would naturally change to the relation between occupier and occupied.

According to the Iraqi constitution, Peshmerga forces constitute the Iraq's security establishment and, accordingly, they should be provided with required budget by the Iraqi federal government. Moreover, they should be armed in the framework of budget provided for the armament of the Iraqi army. Iraq continuously equips its military forces, but does not allow Peshmerga forces to do so. Thus, the question that should be considered is whether this does not raise doubts for Kurds, particularly when the Iraqi government's military and defence have been put under the control of some unconstitutional agencies in the Iraqi Prime Minister's office. However, the constitutional defence establishments have been remained useless and powerless.

The battle for oil rights is another part of the conflict between Iraq and Kurdistan. The Iraqi government always seeks to delay passing the oil-gas draft law so that the Kurdistan Region is unable to boost its infrastructure and remain weakened economically. This is because Baghdad

wants the region to have no oil revenue so as to use the Kurdistan Region's allocated budget for political purposes anytime they want. Shahrستاني's recent acts prepare the ground for such assumptions and the Iraqi Oil Ministry has also started to reduce and delay transporting the region's share of oil.

Therefore, it is wondered whether the above factors are not deemed as the real causes of Kurds' fear of the armament of the Iraqi forces. If the question then is what can be done to stop the worrying situation in which Kurds feel unsafe in return of the Iraq's attempts to arm its troops, the answer is very obvious for us, Iraqi government, all the Iraqi parliaments' fractions, political analysts, all the countries which have played active role in arming Iraqi forces including the USA. The answer can be worded as follows: Baghdad should implement all the articles of the Iraqi constitution, particularly those that are related to the pending issues between Baghdad and the Kurdistan Region. By doing so, the fear and anxiety faced by the Kurdish people will be entirely vanished.

<http://pukmedia.co/english/index.php/opinion/2232-why-kurds-feel-anxious-about-the-armament-of-the-iraqi-army-forces>

- **Masum: National Alliance to discuss Reform Paper with parties**

Head of Kurdistan Alliance Bloc in the Iraqi Parliament Dr. Fuad Masum told PUKmedia that the National Alliance needs to exchange views with all parties in order to discuss the Reform Paper.

Regarding the remarks presented by the Kurdistan Alliance Block on the Reform Paper announced by the National Alliance, Dr. Masum said that the Kurdistan Alliance has the Erbil Paper , there are other papers like the one of Najaf meeting.

Dr. Masum stressed that the Erbil Agreement is the key one because the government was formed according to it .

<http://pukmedia.co/english/index.php/77/iraq/2230-masum-national-alliance-to-discuss-reform-paper-with-parties>

2. IRAN

• Iran Proposes to Host Palestinian Groups' Talks

TEHRAN (FNA)- Iran offered to host talks among different Palestinian groups in Tehran to help facilitate their unification process, Director-General of the Iranian Presidential Office for International Affairs Mohammad Reza Forqani announced on Monday.

Forqani made the remarks, pointing to the recent meeting between Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas on the sidelines of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) summit in Tehran.

"The president announced Iran's preparedness to host the Palestinian groups' negotiations in a move to unite them," he told FNA today.

"The Palestinian side welcomed the idea and described it as practical," Forqani said.

Abbas, heading a high-ranking delegation, arrived in Tehran on Wednesday to attend the 16th Non-Aligned Movement summit

held in the Iranian capital from August 26 to 31.

His visit to Tehran angered Israeli officials so deeply that the regime's foreign minister Avigdor Liberman asked for his assassination.



Israeli Foreign Minister Avigdor Liberman in an interview with Channel 10 of Israeli television used harsh and provocative remarks against Abbas and asked for the assassination of the PA chief or his seizure in Ramallah when he returns from Iran.

Despite the fact that his call for assassinating Abbas is a blatant case of state-sponsored terrorism, the Israeli foreign minister used vulgar language to insult over 120 NAM member states calling them all "terrorists".

"The fact that Abbas attended terrorists' summit in Tehran is a black day in Israel's history," Liberman said.

<http://english.farsnews.com/newstext.php?nn=9106061510>

- **Commander Calls Iran Only Power to Ensure Security in Persian Gulf**

TEHRAN (FNA)- A senior commander of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) called the US military presence in the region as a source of insecurity in the Persian Gulf, and reiterated that Iran is the sole regional power which can ensure security in the strategic water.

"Americans' presence undermines security in the Persian Gulf, the Strait of Hormuz and the Sea of Oman," IRGC Navy Commander Rear Admiral Ali Fadavi said in the Southern port city of Bushehr on Monday.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran is the sole power that enjoys the ability to ensure security in the region, and the world is understanding that security is possible if Iran guarantees it," Fadavi noted.

"Persian Gulf security is a global need," he added.

Iranian officials have always cautioned about the devastating consequences of tension in the region, and called on certain regional states to be watchful of the plots of some aliens who seek to stir tension in this sensitive region.

Tehran believes that deployment of trans-regional powers in the region impairs security and is a source of tension in the region, reiterating that peace and security will be established if all the regional countries grow united and stage all-out cooperation.

Iran's naval power has even been acknowledged by foes. In a Sep. 11, 2008 report, the Washington Institute for the Near East Policy also said that in the two decades since the Iraqi imposed war on Iran, the Islamic Republic has excelled in naval capabilities and is able to wage unique asymmetric warfare against larger naval forces.

According to the report, Iran's Navy has been transformed into a highly motivated, well-equipped, and well-financed force and is effectively in control of the world's oil lifeline, the Strait of Hormuz.

The study says that if Washington takes military action against the Islamic Republic, the scale of Iran's response would likely be proportional to the scale of the damage inflicted on Iranian assets.

The Islamic Republic's top military officials have repeatedly warned that in case of an attack by either the US or Israel, the country would target 32 American bases in the Middle East and close the strategic Strait of Hormuz.

An estimated 40 percent of the world's oil supply passes through the waterway.

A recent study by a fellow at Harvard's Olin Institute for Strategic Studies, Caitlin Talmadge, warned that Iran could use mines as well as missiles to block the strait, and that "it could take many weeks, even months, to restore the full flow of commerce, and more time still for the oil markets to be convinced that stability had returned".

<http://english.farsnews.com/newstext.php?nn=9106061520>

- **Commander: Baku Not to Allow Anyone Use Azerbaijan's Soil against Iran**

TEHRAN (FNA)- Azeri officials pledged not to allow anyone to use their country's soil as a launch pad for attacking the Islamic Republic of Iran, a senior Iranian police commander said.

"Our friends in Azerbaijan's border guard pay special attention to their borders and have announced in their messages that they will not allow any move be taken from their country's soil against Iran's borders," Commander of the Iranian Border Guard Units General Hossein Zolfaqari told FNA on Monday.



Meantime, the commander said that Iranian border guard units have adopted proper measures to intensify border control and started sealing the country's Northwestern borders.

On Friday, Azerbaijan's Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov underlined that his country will not allow enemies to use its soil as a launch pad for attacking other countries, specially Iran.

"Azerbaijan will never allow an action against Iran from its soil," Mammadyarov said at a meeting with Iranian Parliament Speaker Ali Larijani on the sidelines of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) summit here in Tehran.

"The age-old history and culture of the two nations doesn't allow anyone to harm the brotherly ties between Iran and the Republic of Azerbaijan," he added.

His remarks came after Iran warned Azerbaijan not to allow Israel to use the country's territory as a launch pad to stage terrorist activities against the Islamic Republic.

Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi made the remarks during a meeting with Azeri Ambassador to Iran Javanshir Akhundov in Tehran late February.

The warning came in response to reports that Azerbaijan had signed a \$1.6 billion deal with Israel for the purchase of drones and anti-aircraft and missile systems.

<http://english.farsnews.com/newstext.php?nn=9106061508>

- **Iran starts building missile system more advanced than S-300**

TEHRAN, Sept. 3 (MNA) – After Russia refused to deliver S-300 missile system to Iran experts at home have started work on producing a missile system which will be much more advanced than the S-300 system, the commander of the Khatam-ol-Anbia Anti-Aircraft Base announced on Monday.

The missile system, called Bavar 373, will in fact be a replacement for S-300, Brigadier General Farzad Esmaeili told a press conference.

Esmaeili also said air defense maneuvers will start either in the next calendar month of Mehr (September 22-October 21) or Aban (October 22-Novemembr 20).

<http://www.mehrnews.com/en/newsdetail.aspx?NewsID=1687782>

- **Mongolian president visits Natanz nuclear enrichment plant in Iran**

ISFAHAN, Sept. 2 (MNA) – Mongolian President Tsakhiagiin Elbegdorj planned to visit the Natanz nuclear enrichment facility in the central province of Isfahan on Sunday, an official at the office Isfahan governor told the Mehr News Agency.

Elbegdorj made a one-day tour to the city of Isfahan on Sunday, where he visited some historical monuments.

“According to a plan made he will visit the Natanz nuclear installations,” Mohammad Mahdi Esmaili told the Mehr News Agency.

He added the Mongolian president was eager to visit the Natanz site and see Iran’s peaceful nuclear progresses and the request was agreed by President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad of Iran.

<http://www.mehrnews.com/en/newsdetail.aspx?NewsID=1687404>

- **Iran, North Korea sign scientific agreement**

TEHRAN, Sept. 2 (MNA) — Iran and North Korea have signed a scientific and technological cooperation agreement.

The agreement was signed by Iranian Science Minister Kamran Daneshjoo and North Korean Foreign Minister Pak Ui Chun in Tehran on Saturday.

Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, the Iranian president, and Kim Yong Nam, president of North Korea’s Presidium of the Supreme People’s Assembly, were present at the signing ceremony.

The agreement will include setting up joint scientific and technological laboratories, exchange of scientific teams and transfer of technology in the fields of information technology, energy, environment, agriculture and food, reports said.

The North Korean officials had visited Tehran to participate in the Non-Aligned Movement summit which was concluded on Friday.

In a meeting on the sidelines of the NAM conference, Ahmadinejad said Kim’s visit would have a “great impact on strengthening bilateral ties, expanding

cooperation and boosting the anti-hegemonic front.”

<http://www.mehrnews.com/en/newsdetail.aspx?NewsID=1686997>

- **Iran's Armed Forces ready to counter threats: Cmdr.**

A single-stage solid-propellant, surface-to-surface Fateh (Victor) missile is launched during the Great Prophet 7 missile drill in Semnan desert, central Iran, July 3, 2012.

A single-stage solid-propellant, surface-to-surface Fateh (Victor) missile is launched during the Great Prophet 7 missile drill in Semnan desert, central Iran, July 3, 2012.

Mon Sep 3, 2012 6:19AM GMT



A senior Iranian commander says the Islamic Republic’s Armed Forces are fully prepared to counter any potential threat against the country.

Thanks to rich, efficient, committed, brave and faithful human resources, the Iranian Armed Forces are more prepared than ever to defend the values of the Islamic Revolution and protect Iran’s borders, Commander of Iran's Khatam al-Anbiya Air Defense Base Brigadier General Farzad Esmaili said on Sunday.

The Iranian commander added that Iran’s response to any threat will be “strong, swift and resolute.”

He went on to describe Iran as a "vast, powerful and independent" country which is “very influential” in resolving regional and trans-regional issues.

Esmaili reiterated that the Iranian military doctrine is “defensive” in nature and that there is no place for aggression in the country’s guiding principles.

Iran’s Khatam al-Anbiya Air Defense Base conveys the message of peace, friendship, tranquility and security for all freedom-seeking, independent and friendly countries and is a warning to all the enemies of the Islamic Republic, the Iranian commander said.

The Khatam al- Anbiya Air Defense Base is in charge of coordinating the aerial defense activities of the Iranian Army and Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC).

In recent years, Iran has made great achievements in its defense sector and attained self-sufficiency in producing essential military equipment and systems.

The country has repeatedly assured other nations, especially regional neighbors, that its military might poses no threat to other countries, insisting that its defense doctrine is merely based on deterrence.

<http://www.presstv.ir/detail/2012/09/03/259582/iran-fully-prepared-to-counter-threats/>

- **NAM summit a great achievement for Iran: Salehi**

Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Salehi has said that the 16th Summit of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) in Tehran was a great achievement for Iran.

“The success of the Islamic Republic of Iran [in holding the summit] was so clear that even some Western media called it as Iran’s victory against the West,” Salehi said on Sunday night.

He praised different Iranian organizations, such as police and armed forces, for keeping order and security during the summit.



There were 360 security checkpoints across Tehran, and 110,000 police officers and other security personnel were directly involved in maintaining security during the meeting.

Salehi also noted that he met with 63 foreign ministers of the Non-Aligned Movement.

The 16th NAM Summit wrapped up in the Iranian capital on Friday, with the member

states passing a final resolution, which included over 700 paragraphs.

Iran assumed the rotating presidency of the NAM for a three-year term during the summit.

NAM is an international organization with 120 member states that is not formally aligned with or against any major power bloc. Nearly two-thirds of the countries of the United Nations are also NAM members.

NAM is the biggest international organization after the United Nations General Assembly.

<http://www.presstv.ir/detail/2012/09/03/259552/nam-a-great-achievement-for-iran/>

- **Iran to raise Nargesi oil field output by 120 million barrels**

Iran is to enhance recoverable oil from the onshore Nargesi Oil Field in the south of the country by 120 million barrels, National Iranian South Oil Company (NISOC) says.



NISOC announced in a report released on Sunday that the oil field would see its output rise after gas injection and associated gas gathering operations.

The \$33 million recovery enhancement project has been commissioned to an Iranian contractor within the framework of an Engineering, Procurement and Construction (EPC) contract.

The field, discovered in 1974, is located 30 kilometers north of the city of Borazjan in the southern Iranian Bushehr province.

NISOC is currently operating nearly 750 oil output preservation projects, 12 of which are scheduled to come on-stream by the end of the current Iranian calendar year in March 2013.

NISOC, a subsidiary of the state-run National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC),

accounts for three million barrels per day of crude oil.

<http://www.presstv.ir/detail/2012/09/02/259522/iran-to-raise-oil-field-output/>

- **Iran-Afghanistan Joint Economic Commission to meet in Kabul**
کمیسیون اقتصادی مشترک ایران و افغانستان

Trade between Iran and Afghanistan has grown in the past decade, mainly due to closer ties between the two countries.”

Afghan Foreign Ministry spokesman Janan Mosazai

Afghan Foreign Ministry spokesman Janan Musazai says Iran-Afghanistan Joint Economic Commission is to hold its fourth meeting in the Afghan capital September 4-5.



“The main objective behind this meeting is to...strengthen and broaden economic, commercial, educational, cultural,

transportation and consular cooperation [between Kabul and Tehran],” Mosazai was quoted by IRNA as saying on Sunday.

“The commission was established in 2004 and its first meeting was held in Tehran,” he said, adding “We welcome the commission’s gathering in Kabul and hope that it would result in further progress in bilateral cooperation.”

Mosazai said Iran and Afghanistan, as next-door neighbors, share deep-seated lingual, cultural, religious and historic bonds, not to mention their political, economic and social cooperation.

“Cooperation between the two countries in the past ten years has been within the framework of this joint commission,” the Afghan official said. “Trade between Iran and Afghanistan has grown in the past decade, mainly due to closer ties between the two countries.”

Iran's Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Salehi said in July Tehran has fulfilled its financial commitments for the reconstruction of war-ravaged Afghanistan.

Iran's aid to Afghanistan was provided in the form of infrastructure projects including the construction of 300 kilometers of roads, 207 kilometers of railways, supplying water and electricity and building clinics for special medical purposes, Salehi said.

“Iran has invested more than USD 500 million in building roads, railroads, schools and hospitals in Afghanistan. We are hosting more than 3 million Afghan refugees in our country. More than 300,000 Afghan students attend our schools and over 8,000 students attend our universities,” the Iranian minister had earlier said.

<http://www.presstv.ir/detail/2012/09/02/259499/iranoafghan-council-to-meet-in-kabul/>

3. ISRAEL - PALESTINE

- **Fatah officials angry at PA's delay of statehood bid**

Senior Fatah official says Abbas decision not to present UN membership request during GA "harmful" to PA credibility.

MAHMOUD ABBAS Photo: REUTERS

The Palestinian Authority's decision to postpone plans to seek UN membership next month has angered some Fatah officials in the West Bank.

PA President Mahmoud Abbas was expected to ask the UN General Assembly this month to grant non-member status for a Palestinian state in the international body. Nonmember status does not require the approval of the Security Council.

Related:

'US will veto any Palestinian statehood bid at UN'

Abbas arrives in Tehran for Non-Aligned Movement

In recent weeks, Abbas and other PA officials had stressed that the PA was determined to renew its bid for recognition of statehood and membership at the UN despite objections from Israel and the US.

But last week, PA Foreign Minister Riad Maliki, in a surprise move, announced that Abbas would not present a request for membership in the UN during his speech before the General Assembly in late September. The decision to delay the

request was taken following heavy pressure from the US administration and some EU countries.

Maliki hinted that the statehood bid had been delayed until after the US presidential election. His announcement drew sharp criticism from Tawfik Tirawi, a senior member of the Fatah Central Committee and former head of the PA's General Intelligence Service in the West Bank.

Tirawi accused the PA foreign minister of "disparaging the minds of Palestinians and their strategic right that they have been defending with their souls and blood."



Tirawi said that no one had authorized Maliki to speak on behalf of the PA leadership and government.

"Minister Maliki is not the one who decides whether the membership request

would be presented or delayed," Tirawi said in an unprecedented attack on the PA foreign minister.

"This is a decision that will be taken by the PLO Executive Committee, the Palestinian Authority leadership and the government."

Tirawi said that Maliki's announcement was "harmful" to the PA leadership and its credibility.

On Sunday evening, Maliki issued a statement in which he denied that he had talked about delaying the statehood bid. He added that the PA leadership still has not set a date for presenting its request to the UN.

Two other senior Fatah officials in the West Bank also criticized the apparent decision to delay the statehood bid after the PA had affirmed that it would go ahead with the move.

Nimer Hammad, political adviser to Abbas, said that the PA still has not decided when to file the request for membership in the UN. He explained that the PA first wants to make sure that a large number of UN

General Assembly members are in favor of the statehood bid.

Abbas is also scheduled to consult with Arab League foreign ministers later this week to win their backing for the new statehood bid.

The Arab League last month voiced backing for Abbas's plan to seek UN recognition of a Palestinian state.

The PLO Executive Committee is expected to hold a meeting in Ramallah on Monday to discuss the statehood bid and the ongoing Fatah-Hamas dispute said Wasel Abu Yusef, a PLO official. At the meeting, Abbas will brief the PLO leaders on the outcome of his visit to Iran and US pressure to abandon the statehood bid.

<http://www.jpost.com/MiddleEast/Article.aspx?id=283615>

- **PM calls on ministers to limit foreign trips**

Netanyahu urges cabinet members to set "personal example" amid rising prices and worsening economy.

Amid rising prices and the worsening economy, Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu asked his cabinet members to set a "personal example" and minimize their trips abroad.

The only exception, he said, was trips to China, which Netanyahu encouraged in order to deepen Sino- Israel relations.

The issue came up during the cabinet's routine approval of ministerial trips abroad.

The prime minister related to the economic situation at the beginning of the weekly cabinet meeting, saying that the world was still in the midst of the worst economic crisis it has faced in 80 years.



"These conditions are making things difficult for the citizens of all countries, especially the developed countries, and also for Israelis," he said. "We need to

tighten our belt in order to maintain Israel's economy, and that is not easy, and it presents difficulties for the citizens, and I know that."

Netanyahu said that alongside the difficulties, the government was taking action to ease the situation. He ticked off a number of steps, including free education for children from age three, free dental care until age 12, and reform in the cellular phone market. Those steps, he said, were "saving money for many citizens."

"The most important thing," he said, "is that we are maintaining the places of employment for Israeli citizens."

To prove this point he referred to statistics released last week by the Central Bureau of Statistics placing the country's unemployment rate at 6.5%, down from 7.1% and lower than in the US, Europe and most developed nations in the world.

Finance Minister Yuval Steinitz also related to the figures, saying that they show there was no significant increase in unemployment in the country, and in fact there has been a decrease. He said that

price increases are "never pleasant," but "we are taking the necessary steps to achieve two goals: high economic growth and low unemployment."

<http://www.jpost.com/DiplomacyAndPolitics/Article.aspx?id=283617>

- **Barak recommends postponing decision on Ariel**

Defense minister pens letter to PM advising he await Supreme Court ruling on petition over Ariel University Center's status.

Defense Minister Ehud Barak on Sunday penned a letter to Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu recommending he postpone a decision on the status of the Ariel University Center until the Supreme Court rules on a petition against the institution.

Barak also stated that Netanyahu should bring the issue to the cabinet following the Supreme Court ruling.

Barak has been delaying any progress toward realizing the decision of The Council for Higher Education in Judea and

Samaria to grant Ariel University Center full university status.

Since Ariel is in the West Bank, which is under the IDF's authority, OC Central Command Maj.-Gen. Nitzan Alon must sign the declaration, and may only do so after receiving instructions from Barak.

In 2010, Barak approved upgrading Ariel's status from college to university center.

In response to Barak's letter, MK Alex Miller (Yisrael Beytenu), an Ariel resident who heads the Knesset Caucus for Turning Ariel University Center into a University, said: "Barak's failure to sign on to the change of the AUC status is a flagrant violation of coalition agreements under which he and his party are bound."

Likud MK Tzipi Hotovely also slammed Barak for the letter. "As long as there is no security issue, Barak's opinion should not matter," she said, adding that Barak's move was "anti-democratic" and aimed only for "political gain."

<http://www.jpost.com/DiplomacyAndPolitics/Article.aspx?id=283590>

- **'Media exaggerating US-Israel differences on Iran'**

US envoy Shapiro says 'Yediot' report of spat between himself, Netanyahu is "silly story," adds US prepared to act on Iran.

US ambassador to Israel Dan Shapiro
Photo: Courtesy Netanya Academic College

US ambassador Dan Shapiro on Sunday denied that there was any crisis between Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu and US President Barack Obama over the Iranian issue, in an interview with Channel 2.

"There is definitely a narrative in the media right now – I'd say an overheated one – about tension between the US and Israel over Iran," Shapiro said, adding that this narrative does not "reflect the very close coordination and very intense work we've done together to address an issue that we perceive the same way, which is the importance of preventing Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons."



Asked why the US did not give the Iranians a clear ultimatum – stop the nuclear program "or else" – Shapiro replied: "I think there is no mistaking what the US is prepared to do." Shapiro said that Obama and Netanyahu, as well as their "teams," speak regularly, and that the relationship "at the top" is "just what it needs to be."

The US envoy denied a Yediot Ahronot report Friday of a heated exchange with Netanyahu over the Iranian issue where "sparks flew" during a recent meeting with visiting US Congressman Mike Rogers.

"That is a very silly story," Shapiro said. "The published account of that meeting did not reflect what actually occurred at the meeting. The conversations were entirely friendly and professional, they always are. I always speak respectfully with the prime minister, just as the prime minister always speaks respectfully with me."

<http://www.jpost.com/DiplomacyAndPolitics/Article.aspx?id=283573>

- **Israeli jets fire on Hamas site in Gaza, no injuries**

BETHLEHEM (Ma'an) -- Israeli warplanes fired on a training site of Hamas' military wing in the central Gaza Strip overnight Sunday, without reports of casualties.



Fighter jets fired two missiles at the Al-Qassam Brigades grounds south of Gaza City, witnesses said.

An Israeli army statement said that aircraft "targeted a terror activity site in the northern Gaza Strip, confirming a direct hit."

"The site was targeted in a direct response to the ongoing rocket fire towards southern Israel," it continued.

An Israeli army spokesman said four rockets hit southern Israel on Sunday, without causing damage or injuries.

On Wednesday Israel shelled two compounds in Gaza City, injuring two women, according to medical officials.

The Israeli army said the targets were weapons manufacturing and storage sites and that they were hit in retaliation for rocket-fire earlier in the week.

<http://www.maannews.net/eng/ViewDetails.aspx?ID=516681>

- **Israeli settlers move into Silwan home**

The Hamdullah family says they have been living in their home since 1952 after purchasing the land in Silwan. (MaanImages/HO)

JERUSALEM (Ma'an) -- Israeli settlers, accompanied by police guards, moved into a section of a Palestinian home in East Jerusalem on Sunday, locals said.

Israeli authorities had informed the Hamdullah family they would have to evacuate part of their home in the Silwan neighborhood of Ras al-Amud after a court ruling said it belonged to settlers, local group the Wadi al-Hilweh information center said.

The family says they have been living on the premises since 1952 after purchasing the land from the al-Ghoul family.



Israeli daily Haaretz said that settler patron Irwin Moskowitz bought the land in 1990 from Orthodox Jewish groups, who claimed they had bought the land before 1948.

In 2005 a Jerusalem court ruled that the family must evacuate all buildings constructed after 1989.

Moskowitz wants to expand Maaleh Hazeitim, the largest settlement in East Jerusalem, on the land.

The Hamdullah home lies in a critical neighborhood near the Al-Aqsa Mosque, the site of a number of settlements and controversial Israeli archeological digs, which residents fear are intended to cement Israeli control over the area.

Israel annexed East Jerusalem -- regarded as the capital of a future Palestinian state - - after a 1967 war, a move never recognized by the international community.

<http://www.maannews.net/eng/ViewDetails.aspx?ID=516502>

- **Abbas to raise UN bid at Arab League meeting**

BETHLEHEM (Ma'an) -- When the Arab League meets this week, President Mahmoud Abbas will present Palestine's UN bid to foreign ministers for discussion, officials said Sunday night.

Arab League envoys are convening on Monday and Tuesday, ahead of the 138th

regular meeting of Arab foreign ministers during the following two days.

Palestinian ambassador to Egypt and representative to the Arab League Barakat al-Farra told Ma'an that meetings kicking off on Monday would hold a session called the question of Palestine and the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Arab representatives will discuss Israeli practices in Jerusalem, settlement activities, the separation wall, the situation of Palestinian refugees, UNRWA's aid, development and support to the Palestinian Authority's budget, according to al-Farra.

Abbas and Egyptian president Muhammad Mursi will attend Wednesday's foreign ministers meeting, he said.

Abbas will update the meeting on latest developments with Palestine's bid for a membership upgrade at the United Nations, as well as new findings regarding the death of Palestinian President Yasser Arafat, the envoy added.



PA foreign minister Riyad al-Malki reiterated in a statement on Sunday that the government was still waiting for the Arab League meeting to discuss the timing of the bid, which has yet to be decided.

Earlier the foreign minister had indicated that the PA would ask to be made a non-member observer state at the UN General Assembly in September.

A previous bid for full UN membership stalled at the Security Council last year.

A simple majority vote in the 193-member General Assembly would be enough to bestow non-member observer status, bypassing the Security Council -- where the United States, Israel's ally, has a veto.

Such status, akin to the Vatican's, would be an indirect recognition of Palestinian statehood in the West Bank, East Jerusalem and Gaza Strip. It would allow

Palestine to join a number of UN agencies, as well as the International Criminal Court.

<http://www.maannews.net/eng/ViewDetails.aspx?ID=516686>

- **Israeli Airstrike Causes Damages in Central of Gaza Strip**

GAZA, September 3, 2012 (Wafa) – Israeli warplanes raided Monday at dawn Nuseirat refugee camp in central Gaza, causing material damages in the area, according to Wafa correspondent.

He said that an Israeli F-16 warplane fired at least one missile at the eastern area of the camp, causing material damages there. No injuries reported.

<http://english.wafa.ps/index.php?action=detail&id=20582>

- **Abbas Receives Japan's Representative to PA**

RAMALLAH, September 2, 2012 (Wafa) – President Mahmoud Abbas Sunday received Japan's representative to the Palestinian Authority (PA), Naofumi Hashimoto, on the occasion of finishing his work in the Palestinian Territory.

Abbas commended Hashimoto for his great efforts to strengthen the ties of friendship between Palestine and Japan.

Presidential diplomatic adviser Majdi al-Khalidi honored Hashimoto with the distinguished ambassador medal.

<http://english.wafa.ps/index.php?action=detail&id=20579>

- **Non-Aligned Movement Affirms Support for Palestine**

TEHRAN, September 1, 2012 (Wafa) – The 16th Non-Aligned movement summit held in the Iranian capital Tehran Friday concluded its agenda with issuing three statements concerning the Palestinian cause.

The first statement affirmed the Palestinian people’s lawful rights, the independence of Palestine with Jerusalem as its capital and refugees rights to return.

The summit adopted the Ramallah statement expected to be issued following the Non-Aligned movement meeting that was canceled after Israel prevented the

participating countries from entering Palestine.

The Ramallah statement asserted the sole legitimacy of the PLO over the Palestinian people under the leadership of President Mahmoud Abbas.

It supported the efforts to achieve the Palestinian reconciliation according to the Cairo and Doha agreements.

The third statement, issued for the first time by the movement, expressed solidarity with the Palestinian prisoners and called for their immediate release.

<http://english.wafa.ps/index.php?action=detail&id=20567>

4. AFRICA and EGYPT

- **Tunisian Amazighs face Islamist harassment**

Amazighs in Tunisia say they will fight to preserve their culture, despite intimidation from religious hardliners.

The use of Tifinagh characters on Amazigh festival banners sparked criticism from Tunisian Islamists.

Threats from radical Islamists prevented Tunisian Amazigh associations from holding a conference in the country's southern Matmata region.

Six Tunisian Amazigh groups planned their event, which aimed to unite the Tunisian Amazigh movement, to coincide with the 20th Tamezret Festival for Amazigh Culture on August 24th-25th.

But hard-line Islamists protested against the use of Tifinagh characters on the festival banners and demanded their removal, together with Amazigh flags.

They accused the Amazigh activists "of collaborating with foreign entities and of serving a Western, secular agenda hostile to the Islamic Arab identity of Tunisia".

"We preferred to calm down the situation rather than be dragged to any acts that may harm our image and mission," Nouri Nemri, a Tunisian Amazigh activist, told Magharebia. "In addition, we wanted to alleviate pressures on the organisers of the festival, which was a real success and attracted an audience that exceeded our

expectations. Therefore, we decided to postpone the conference."

As to the most important issues for the Tunisian Amazigh movement, Nemri said activists were focused on protecting their culture.

"We demand the state bear its responsibility in protecting, preserving and maintaining the Amazigh heritage and culture. We also confirm that the entity we're seeking to create has a purely association, cultural nature," he said.

Nemri said that the Tunisian Amazigh movement was not currently seeking official recognition of Tamazight in the constitution, despite the desires of some activists.

"However, let's be realistic: Tamazight-speaking populations in Tunisia represent only 5% of the population, although the percentage of populations of Amazigh origins is much higher," Nemri said. "We're seeing what's happening in neighbouring countries where there are many Tamazight-speaking people."

He added that Tunisia's Amazighs have been able to preserve their culture, habits, language and identity throughout history in spite of restrictions and hostility.

"We resisted the Ottomans, the French, the state of Bourguiba and the state of Ben Ali," he said. "Today, there are the radical Islamists and nationalists who fight against the Tunisian identity. In spite of all this, we've been able to protect and preserve our identity."

Prior to the revolution, Nemri said that "Amazigh culture had been restricted to tourist consumption. Other than that, it was banned."

The first attempts to form Amazigh cultural associations date back to the 1980s but were strongly opposed by the former regime, he said.

"After the revolution, many Amazigh associations were formed," he added. "Today, we're trying to unite their efforts and co-ordinate their work. However, they are met with hostility by Islamists and nationalists."

Despite the threats, the 20th round of the Tamezret Festival for Amazigh Culture was a great success, according to organisers. More than 5,000 people, including Amazighs from Libya and Algeria, attended the event.

Lassad Labouz, the president of the Tamezret Association for the Protection of Heritage, said that the festival programme including seminars on the Tamazight language and culture

Tunisian Amazigh musician Lazhar Bin Ouirane also performed with a Libyan band. The event wrapped up with Tunisian Amazigh artist Zohra Lajnef.

http://www.magharebia.com/cocoon/awi/xhtml1/en_GB/features/awi/features/2012/08/31/feature-01

- **Top court to consider Shura Council challenge after 17 September**

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Ministers yawning, snoozing, and absent-minded during session of Shura Council to discuss issue of Sinai development, Cairo, April 1,2012.

The Supreme Constitutional Court will delay consideration of a lawsuit demanding the dissolution of the upper house of Parliament until a report by the court's commissioners is completed on 17 September.

The commissioners of the Supreme Constitutional Court, a legal advisory body, are currently preparing a final report on the constitutionality of the law that governs parliamentary elections. The purpose of the report is to advise the court's ruling in the case, filed by a losing candidate in elections for the upper house, the Shura Council.



The court had earlier ruled against the law that elected Parliament in a separate case filed against the lower house, the People's Assembly. That ruling led to the dissolution of the People's Assembly,

deciding that its elections were unconstitutional.

However, challenges to both legislative bodies must be brought in separate lawsuits — though they were both elected according to the same law. Therefore, only the People's Assembly was dissolved when the Supreme Constitutional Court issued its ruling on 14 June.

Muslim Brotherhood lawyer Abdel Moneim Abdel Maqsood demanded the case be halted until the court considers an appeal against its earlier decision on the People's Assembly. He said any case should not rely on a court ruling that is under judicial dispute.

Abdel Maqsood, along with Brotherhood members Mohamed Toson and Nasser al-Hafy, demanded a certificate from High Judicial Elections Commission stating that the candidates who won in the Shura Council elections in Luxor against Adnan al-Shoqairy, the man who filed the Shura Council lawsuit, do not belong to the Muslim Brotherhood's Freedom and Justice Party. They also demanded that the case be delayed until they receive this certificate.

Shoqairy, though, criticized the Brotherhood's claim that the candidates do not belong to the FJP. He demanded the dissolution of the Shura Council altogether, saying that independent seats should only have been contested by independent parties, not political parties. He said conducting the elections in this way violated the temporary constitution's principle of equal opportunity for all citizens.

Abdel Maqsooud told Al-Masry Al-Youm that demands to dissolve the Shura Council are "systematic schemes to destroy all the institutions elected by the people."

He added: "The court has the right only to rule that the legal provisions of the Shura Council are unconstitutional, but [the court] cannot dissolve it, since it is an advisory, not executive, entity."

<http://www.egyptindependent.com/news/top-court-consider-shura-council-challenge-after-17-september>

- **Report accuses Shafiq of insulting judiciary**

Commander Ahmed Shafiq, Presidential Candidate, casts his ballot in Presidential Elections runoff, New Cairo, 16 June 2012. Run-off between the Muslim Brotherhood's candidate Mohamed Morsi and Ahmed Shafiq, the last prime minister of ousted leader Hosni Mubarak.
Aly el-Malky

Former MP Essam Sultan and 16 other lawyers filed a report with the attorney general Sunday accusing former presidential candidate Ahmed Shafiq of insulting the judiciary.



The report says that Shafiq made his comments to satellite channels after his name was placed on the Egyptian authorities' watch list. Those who filed the report are members of the Front for Defending the Judiciary.

Shafiq was placed on the watch list after Sultan accused him of facilitating the illegal allocation of 40,000 square meters of Pilots Association-owned land in the Bitter Lakes region to Alaa and Gamal Mubarak at below-market rates.

According to the report filed Sunday, Shafiq told the channels that the court's placing of his name on the watch list was "political," as investigations in the case have not progressed far enough for such a step.

"I was not questioned, and my opinion was not considered," Shafiq said. He also said "men of the law" had told him the case's investigations have been forged.

The lawyers' report says Shafiq's remarks are a way to terrorize and interfere with the judiciary's work. It called on the attorney general to take all necessary legal measures against Shafiq.

Shafiq, Mubarak's last prime minister, lost to now-President Mohamed Morsy in the final round of the election last June.

<http://www.egyptindependent.com/news/report-accuses-shafiq-insulting-judiciary>

- **Mali Islamists say Algerian diplomat executed**

Islamic extremists said Sunday they have executed an Algerian diplomat who was kidnapped during their takeover of northern Mali, according to a statement published by a Mauritanian news agency.

Tahar Touati, the Algerian vice consul "was executed this morning [Saturday] at dawn," said the statement from the Movement for Oneness and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO) published by online news agency ANI.

The agency often carries reliable information on extremist groups in the region.

"The Algerian government must take complete responsibility for the consequences of its stubbornness and the misguided and irresponsible decisions of its president and its generals," read the statement.

The communique was also posted on Internet sites in Algeria.

MUJAO had on 24 August given an ultimatum to Algeria, threatening to kill

the hostage after Algiers rejected its demands for the release of three jihadists arrested in the south of the country.

"The execution of the diplomat came after the expiration of an ultimatum given to the Algerian government," said the statement.



"Algerian negotiators refused to agree on a deal to release the hostages at the last minute," it added.

Algerian authorities have said they are verifying the reports of the diplomat's execution.

Sunday's statement "is currently the focus of the necessary verification to ensure its authenticity," the Algerian foreign ministry said in a statement released by the official APS news agency.

"Contact has not been broken" with the kidnapers, it added.

MUJAO, an armed jihadist group which first surfaced in December 2011, presenting itself as a splinter group of Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) is one of several extremist groups which seized Mali's north five months ago.

They claimed the 5 April kidnapping of seven Algerian diplomats from a consulate in the town of Gao, one of the main northern cities which has fallen into the extremists' hands.

In May they demanded the release of Islamist militants detained in Algeria and a sum of 15 million euros in return for freeing the Algerians.

Three of the hostages were freed on 12 July.

A video MUJAO released on 26 August showed one of the four remaining hostages pleading with the government to save his life.

<http://www.egyptindependent.com/news/mali-islamists-say-algerian-diplomat-executed>

- **Benghazi Car Bomb Kills Military Officer, Wounds Another**

A Libyan intelligence officer, Colonel Juma Al-Kadiki was killed and another, Captain Basit Agfiza Mabrouk, was wounded on Sunday when their car exploded in Gamal Abdel-Nasser street , the busiest street in Libya's eastern city of Benghazi, a security spokesman said. Agfiza was rushed for urgent treatment.

A bomb planted in the car that belonged to one of the officers, was remotely detonated when the two, who reportedly had been attending meeting at the General Intelligence Services, got into the vehicle in a busy shopping district in Benghazi, Abdel Moneim al-Hurr, a Supreme Security Committee spokesman said.

Hurr said the two men in the car had been the target of the explosion and that they were both intelligence officers.

A Reuters journalist saw parts of a body inside the wrecked car. The street was

closed off by dozens of police and military officials.

Gamal Abdel-Nasser street is very close to one of the city's most popular hotels, the Tibesti that early last month was also in the news when seven Iranian Red Crescent members were abducted on their way to this venue where they were residing. The street is also home to many shops, cafes and restaurants.

The attack is the latest to have hit Benghazi this year. They have claimed the lives of fourteen military officials, including that of former Gaddafi regime officer Brigadier-General Mohammed Al-Fitouri who was in charge of weapons-storage in the city. Other assassination attempts have been unsuccessful

<http://www.tripolipost.com/articledetail.asp?c=1&i=9135>

- **Libya: Oil, Gas Revenues Total \$54.9 Billion in 2012**

The Libyan National Oil Corporation (NOC) announced on Sunday that the country's oil and gas revenues for the year 2012 total \$54.9 billion.

According to a press release by NOC, the revenues are calculated according to an average daily oil production at 1.350 million barrels per day at a price of \$100 per barrel.

In the meantime, the Libyan Gulf Oil company has announced a new oil discovery in concession MN4 that is owned totally by NOC and is located 150 kms southwest of Gadams.

The total Libyan oil production during the period between January 1 to July 31, 2012 is 302 million barrels of oil.

NOC also said it has registered an increase in oil production of five percent during the same period or what amounted to \$562 million.

http://www.tripolipost.com/article_detail.asp?c=2&i=9134

5. JORDAN and LEBANON

- **South Lebanon waste dump on fire, blaze feared deliberate**



SIDON, Lebanon: Three firefighting units in the port city of Sidon are battling a fire that broke out Monday morning in the city's waste dump, the third in as many weeks.

Sources at Sidon's municipality told The Daily Star that they feared the fire, which broke out around 9 a.m., was the result of arson.

This is the third time in fewer than three weeks that the Sidon dump catches fire.

A huge blaze that broke out in the landfill Aug. 17 was extinguished only with the intervention of a Lebanese Army helicopter. A smaller fire a few days later was quickly brought under control.

The landfill, which has been used as a site for the disposal of waste material for years, measures approximately 30 meters

in height, and reportedly contains about 500,000 bottles.

<http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Local-News/2012/Sep-03/186524-south-lebanon-waste-dump-on-fire-blaze-feared-deliberate.ashx#ixzz25OR6acXX>

- **Mansour, Lebanese judge to question Sanousi on Sadr's fate**

A billboard shows Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri, left, and Shiite cleric Imam Musa Sadr is seen on the Zahrani highway, Wednesday, Aug. 29, 2012.

BEIRUT: Foreign Minister Adnan Mansour and a Lebanese judge arrived in Mauritania Sunday to question the chief of intelligence under Libya's toppled leader Moammar Gadhafi on the fate of Imam Musa Sadr, a source close to Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri said.

"The Mauritanian government has agreed to questioning the [former] chief of Libyan intelligence Abdullah al-Sanousi by Lebanese officials on the crime of Imam Sadr's disappearance," the source told The Daily Star.

"Speaker Berri is waiting for the results of [Sanousi's] questioning," the source said, speaking on condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of the case.

Sanousi, known as "a treasury of Gadhafi's secrets," was one of the closest aides to the deposed leader. He was fully aware of the visit by Sadr and his two companions to Libya in 1978, media reports said.

Sanousi and Gadhafi's son, Seif al-Islam Gadhafi, have been indicted by the International Criminal Court in relation to attacks against protesters and rebels during Libya's pro-democracy uprising last year.

After Gadhafi was killed by Libyan rebels, some of his senior aides, including Sanousi, fled to neighboring countries, including Tunisia, Mauritania and other Arab and European countries.

Berri said last Friday that the next two days would be decisive in resolving the long-simmering riddle over the case of Sadr, who vanished during an official visit to Libya in 1978. He spoke at a mass rally organized by his Amal Movement in the southern market town of Nabatieh to

commemorate the 34th anniversary of Sadr's disappearance.

Sadr, the founder of the Shiite Amal Movement now headed by Berri, went missing along with Sheikh Mohammad Yacoub and journalist Abbas Badreddine during a visit to Libya on Aug. 31, 1978. Berri and Shiite religious leaders have accused Gadhafi of being responsible for the cleric's disappearance.

Judge Hasan Shami, a member of the government committee tasked with pursuing Sadr's case, who accompanied Mansour on his visit to Mauritania, was expected to question Sanousi on the cleric's fate. He dismissed reports on the discovery of Sadr's suspected body or his clothes in Libya as "baseless."

In a TV interview, Shami said he still believed that Sadr and his two companions were held in an unknown detention center in Libya.

"We believe that Imam Sadr is still alive because it has been confirmed that the imam did not leave Libya and also because there has been no proof of his death," Shami said.

Meanwhile, the Lebanese government is continuing talks with Turkish authorities to secure the release of 12 Lebanese held in Syria, Interior Minister Marwan Charbel said. "We are seeking the release of all Lebanese kidnapped in Syria," Charbel told The Daily Star Sunday night.

He said that in addition to the 10 remaining Lebanese pilgrims abducted by the rebel Free Syrian Army, Hasan Meqdad and another Lebanese were also being held by Syrian rebels.

"The talks with the Turkish side are continuing to win the release of the 12 Lebanese at all once," he said. "Efforts are under way to secure the release of all the hostages together."

Earlier Sunday, Al-Jadeed TV, quoting its correspondent in Turkey, said that a delegation from the Committee of Muslim Scholars in Lebanon was in Turkey to negotiate the release of the 10 Lebanese pilgrims held by the FSA. Al-Jadeed said that Awad Ibrahim, one of the 10 hostages who suffers from health problems, was expected to be released in the next few hours.

According to Al-Jadeed, the scholars' delegation demanded the release of the 10 hostages all at once.

Asked to comment on the TV station's report, Charbel said: "We have not been informed of anything from the Turkish authorities." He added that the talks with the Turkish side were making "slow progress."

Charbel is part of a ministerial committee tasked with resolving the issue of Lebanese hostages held by Syrian rebels. The committee, which is headed by Deputy Prime Minister Samir Moqbel and also includes the foreign affairs, labor and justice ministers, was in contact with the Turkish authorities on the issue. It has kept silent on the results of its contacts.

Hopes for a resolution to the issue of Lebanese hostages in Syria have risen since last month's release of one hostage by Syrian captors.

Charbel said the release of Hussein Ali Omar set the stage for an overall solution to the crisis of Lebanese kidnapping

victims in Syria as well as Syrians abducted in Lebanon.

<http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Politics/2012/Sep-03/186516-mansour-lebanese-judge-to-question-sanousi-on-sadrs-fate.ashx#ixzz25ORN6u2c>

- **Lack of Lebanese efforts to free abducted Turk, source says**

The Lebanese government "did not make efforts" to release Tufan Tekin, a Turkish national kidnapped in Lebanon, in the way it did to free an abducted Kuwaiti citizen, An-Nahar newspaper cited an anonymous Turkish source as saying in its Monday edition.

The source told the daily that efforts carried out by "Turkish intelligence" led to the release of Lebanese citizen Hussein Ali Omar, who was kidnapped in Syria in May along with 10 other Lebanese Shiite pilgrims.

However, the source said that "Turkey was met with the abduction of its citizen by [the Lebanese] Moqdad [clan]."

Furthermore, the source questioned the way the abductors were allowed to roam

freely, labeling them as “criminals sipping coffee in public places.”

In August, members of the Lebanese Moqdad family said that its “military wing” abducted “more than 20 FSA members” and a Turkish national.

The kidnapping followed the abduction of Hassan al-Moqdad in Syria. Moqdad’s kidnappers identified the abductee as a Hezbollah member, a statement denied by the Shiite party.

On Sunday, Terkin urged Turkey to “double its efforts and exert more pressure” to release him, in a statement carried by An-Nahar.

<http://www.nowlebanon.com/Sub.aspx?ID=125478>

- **Future bloc MP says no “military groups” in North Lebanon**

Future bloc MP Jamal al-Jarrah denied on Sunday statements made by a Hezbollah official that there were “military groups in North Lebanon.”

During an interview with Al-Jadeed television, Jarrah called on Hezbollah

Executive Council Deputy Chairman Sheikh Nabil Qaouq “to present the evidence he has [about the military groups] to the Lebanese army intelligence.”

“Based on what we have been hearing, Hezbollah is the [group] sending weapons and fighters to Syria,” Jarrah said.

Lebanon’s Shiite group Hezbollah is mainly backed by Tehran and Damascus.

Qaouq said on Sunday that there were “military bases in Lebanon from which military attacks are being launched against Syrian locations. [These actions are being] facilitated by [forces affiliated with the] March 14 [alliance].”

Lebanon’s political scene is split between supporters of the regime of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, led by Hezbollah, and the pro-Western March 14 camp.

The Future bloc is affiliated with the March 14 alliance.

<http://www.nowlebanon.com/Sub.aspx?ID=125478>

6. SYRIA

- **Syria mission "nearly impossible":
U.N. envoy**

The Algerian diplomat told Ban Ki-moon that he was "honored, flattered, humbled and scared" at the prospect of leading international efforts to broker peace in Syria's worsening 17-month conflict.



AMMAN: Diplomatic attempts to end the Syrian conflict are "nearly impossible" and not enough is being done to end the fighting, the new U.N. and Arab League mediator Lakhdar Brahimi said in a BBC interview broadcast on Monday.

"I know how difficult it is - how nearly impossible. I can't say impossible - nearly impossible," Brahimi, an Algerian diplomat, told the BBC. "And we are not doing much. That in itself is a terrible weight."

Brahimi replaced Kofi Annan as the United Nations and Arab League joint special representative on Syria at the end of August. Annan stepped down after blaming "finger-pointing and name-calling" at the U.N. Security Council for hampering efforts to find a breakthrough in the conflict.

Around 20,000 people have been killed during a 17-month uprising against Syria's President Bashar Assad.

Brahimi said he was "scared of the weight of responsibility" on his shoulders and was aware that not enough is being done to end the violence through diplomacy.

"People are already saying 'People are dying and what are you doing?' And we are not doing much. That in itself is a terrible weight," he told the BBC in an interview conducted in English.

Brahimi said he felt like he was "standing in front of a brick wall", looking for cracks that may yield a solution.

"I'm coming into this job with my eyes open, and (with) no illusions," he said.

<http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Middle-East/2012/Sep-03/186523-syria-mission-nearly-impossible-unenvoy.ashx#ixzz25OS3RhWm>

- **Gulf states criticize Syria as more than 100 killed**

A Syrian rebels are confronting the army and security services members positioned in government buildings and its old castle of the town, an AFP correspondent reported.

DAMASCUS: Arab Gulf monarchies lambasted Syria's regime for deploying heavy weapons against its civilians, as more than 100 people were killed in raids, bombings and air strikes, according to a watchdog toll count.

As the violence raged, new international peace envoy Lakhdar Brahimi said change in Syria was "unavoidable", although he carefully refrained from calling for President Bashar Assad to step down, as his predecessor Kofi Annan had.

Speaking to the BBC, the former Algerian foreign minister admitted that his new mission was "nearly impossible".

He said he was "scared of the weight of responsibility. People are already saying people are dying and what are you doing?"

Jihad Makdissi, a spokesman for Assad's embattled government, announced Brahimi would "soon" travel to Damascus, expressing confidence that "he will listen to us".

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said more than 20 people were killed in an army offensive on Al-Fan village in Hama province, one of the main arenas of conflict in the more than 17-month uprising.

The Britain-based watchdog had no details on whether those killed were civilians or rebel fighters, "but all 21 of the dead were men", said its director Rami Abdel Rahman.

Horrific images shot and posted on YouTube by activists in Al-Fan showed a long row of bodies shrouded in white cloths, laid out on the ground surrounded by scores of weeping men, women and children.

State news agency SANA said all of those killed during the Al-Fan clashes were from "an armed terrorist group that was attacking citizens and security forces".

They were among at least 103 people killed in violence across the country on Sunday, including 66 civilians, according to the latest Observatory figures.

In Damascus, twin bombs exploded near a tightly guarded government compound in the heart of the capital, wounding four people a day after a bombing killed 15 people in the city's south, state television said.

Arab monarchies in the Gulf on Sunday lambasted Syria's regime for deploying heavy weapons against its own civilians.

The six members of the Gulf Cooperation Council at a meeting in Jeddah also urged the international community to "assume their responsibilities and take measures to protect civilians" in Syria where, according to the watchdog group, more than 26,000 people have been killed in the revolt that erupted in March 2011.

The GCC -- which includes Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates, Oman, Qatar and Kuwait -- in a statement issued after the meeting in the Saudi city condemned "the ongoing massacres which are due to the obstinacy of the regime in using heavy weapons, including planes and tanks" against civilians.

The latest bombings struck in Abu Remmaneh district where security buildings and the office of Vice President Faruq al-Shara are located, the television said, blaming "terrorists".

Shara is the highest-ranking Sunni Muslim in Assad's minority Alawite-led government and was the subject of repeated defection rumours last month before he made a public appearance during a visit by a senior envoy from key ally Iran.

The Ahfad al-Rasul (Grandchildren of the Prophet) brigade of the rebel Free Syrian Army claimed responsibility for the attack, also threatening to target Assad's palace.



Near Aleppo, another key battleground in the conflict, an AFP correspondent said air strikes were carried out on a residential area of Al-Bab, a rebel rear base north of the commercial hub.

Syrian rebels also laid siege to Harem, on the Turkish border, confronting the army and security forces positioned in government buildings and the town's old castle, an AFP correspondent reported.

Rights watchdogs have expressed growing concern about deteriorating conditions in areas under a protracted army siege, including parts of Aleppo and third city Homs.

Brahimi, who took over as international peace envoy on Saturday, told Al-Jazeera that "change is necessary, indispensable, unavoidable".

He said his position was to engage all the parties and he would not be drawn on Assad's future.

"It is too early to speak about who should go and who should stay," he told the channel.

"This is not a step backwards. Mr Assad is there and is the president of the present government," he said. "Kofi talked to him, and I will talk to him."

Similar comments by the veteran Algerian diplomat soon after his nomination last month drew an angry reaction from Syria's exiled opposition, which accused him of giving Assad's regime a "licence to kill".

Brahimi, who will formally take the reins in a handover ceremony with Annan and U.N. chief Ban Ki-moon on Tuesday, has been holding meetings at the U.N. headquarters in New York.

He takes over amid mounting pessimism about the prospects for peace after Annan announced he was stepping down last month, blaming divisions in the international community for the failure of his April six-point peace plan.

<http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Middle-East/2012/Sep-03/186527-gulf-states-criticise-syria-as-more-than-100-killed.ashx#ixzz25OS8Zb2y>

- **Bloody assault on village, blasts hit Syria capital**

A Syrian man walks past destroyed buildings in Al-Bab in the northern province of Aleppo on Saturday. (AFP/Achilleas Zavallis)

Troops killed more than 20 people Sunday in a blistering raid on a central village, a watchdog said, while twin blasts rocked Damascus and a town near Syria's second city Aleppo was hit by air strikes.

As the violence raged, new international peace envoy Lakhdar Brahimi said change in Syria was "unavoidable," although he carefully refrained from calling for President Bashar al-Assad to step down, as his predecessor Kofi Annan had.

Jihad Makdissi, a spokesperson for Assad's embattled government, announced Brahimi would "soon" travel to Damascus, expressing confidence that "he will listen to us."

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said it expected the death toll to mount from the army offensive on Al-Fan village in Hama province, one of the main arenas of conflict in the more than 17-month uprising.

The Britain-based watchdog had no details on whether those killed were civilians or rebel fighters, "but all 21 of the dead were men," said its director Rami Abdel Rahman.

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Shara is the highest-ranking Sunni Muslim in Assad's minority Alawite-led government and was the subject of repeated defection rumors last month before he made a public appearance during a visit by a senior envoy from key ally Iran.

The Ahfad al-Rasul (Grandchildren of the Prophet) brigade of the rebel Free Syrian Army claimed responsibility for the attack, also threatening to target Assad's palace.

Near Aleppo, another key battleground in the conflict, an AFP correspondent said air strikes were carried out on a residential area of Al-Bab, a rebel rear base north of the commercial hub.

"The plane circled and circled and circled before it dropped the bomb," said Ahmed, a resident of the town which is periodically targeted. He pointed out fragments of vehicles protruding out of the debris.

Columns of smoke rose from the entrance to Aleppo itself, where fighting was reported to have been limited to a handful of neighborhoods of the city, scene of fierce fighting since July 20.

Elsewhere, shelling of Qusayr destroyed the last working bakery in the rebel-held part of the central town, activists said, aggravating a growing food shortage.

Rights watchdogs have expressed growing concern about deteriorating conditions in areas under a protracted army siege, including parts of Aleppo and third city Homs.

"The shelling of Hanano did not stop from midnight until 5 a.m.," an activist told AFP from the pro-opposition northeastern district of Aleppo.

Brahimi, who took over as international peace envoy on Saturday, told Al-Jazeera that "change is necessary, indispensable, unavoidable."

He said his position was to engage all the parties and he would not be drawn on Assad's future.

"It is too early to speak about who should go and who should stay," he told the channel.

"This is not a step backwards. Mr. Assad is there and is the president of the present government," he said. "Kofi talked to him, and I will talk to him."

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Brahimi, who will formally take the reins in handover ceremony with Annan and UN chief Ban Ki-moon on Tuesday, has been holding meetings at the UN headquarters in New York.

He takes over amid mounting pessimism about the prospects for peace after Annan announced he was stepping down last month, blaming divisions in the international community for the failure of his April six-point peace plan.

The violence has since intensified with August marking the bloodiest month in the uprising, costing 5,440 lives including 1,248 last week alone, according to the Observatory, taking its overall toll for the conflict to 26,283 dead.

In an interview with a Lebanese television station, Syria's foreign ministry spokesperson Makdissi said Brahimi would "soon" make a visit to Damascus.

"We will listen to him and he will listen to us," Makdissi told NBN channel, a pro-Damascus network.

"The issue is not personal, and has nothing to do with the envoy," said Makdissi.

"We tried Mr. Kofi Annan. And all the reasons that led to his initiative's unhappy ending were not Syrian," he said, blaming "powerful UN Security Council members [for] discouraging dialogue."

<http://www.nowlebanon.com/Sub.aspx?ID=125478>

- **Assad blames Turkey for violence, says his regime faces 'global' battle**

Syrian President Bashar al-Assad blamed Turkey for violence in a 17-month-old uprising in the country, in which thousands have died.

“Turkey bears direct responsibility for the blood being shed in Syria,” Assad told the pro-regime local television channel Ad-Dounia in an interview aired Wednesday.

Assad said the talk of a Western-imposed buffer zone on Syrian territory was unrealistic and that the situation in his country, where rebels have been fighting to overthrow him, was “better.”

“Talk of buffer zones firstly is not on the table and secondly it is an unrealistic idea by hostile countries and the enemies of Syria,” he said.

The embattled president, responding to rumors of his whereabouts since a July bombing in Damascus, said he was

speaking from the presidential palace in the capital.

While Assad said the situation is “better” in Syria, he said the country is fighting a “regional and global battle” and it will take time for his regime to win it.

Assad said that his government had been aware some officials were trying to defect and allowed them to leave unhindered.

“Sometimes we had information (on defections) and we would discuss it. Some would suggest we stop them. But we said no, stopping them isn't the right thing to do, letting them leave is the right thing to do ... let's facilitate their exit,” he told the privately-owned channel.

Assad added that such officials should be allowed to leave because it was “cleaning” the state of unpatriotic officials.

Syria's government has been rattled by several high-profile defections as the conflict has escalated, including former premier Riad Hijab and prominent General Manaf Tlass, a childhood friend of Assad.

“Despite several mistakes, there is a strong bond” between the regime and the Syrian people, Assad insisted, boasting the support of the majority of the population.

“What is happening is neither a revolution nor a Spring, it is about terrorist acts in every sense of the term,” he said.

Battle for Taftanaz airport

Syrian rebels, meanwhile, said they destroyed five helicopters in a raid on a military airport between the northern cities of Aleppo and Idlib on Wednesday, while state television said the attack was repelled.

Abu Mossab, a rebel who said he took part in the attack, told AFP via Skype that rebels shelled Taftanaz military airport with two tanks captured from the army and destroyed five helicopters.

“We destroyed five helicopters as well as buildings in the airport,” Abu Mossab said, although it remained in army hands after the raid in which the rebels lost two men before withdrawing.

State television said the military repelled the attack with the airport suffering “no material damage.”

The Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights earlier reported fierce fighting near the airport and helicopter raids on the nearby town of Taftanaz.

In Damascus, activists reported a third straight day of army attacks on rebel strongholds in the eastern outer belt of the city, collectively referred to as East Ghuta.

State media said “terrorist mercenaries” had killed four civilians in Zamalka, using its term for rebels fighting government forces since the anti-regime uprising broke out in March 2011.

They had “murdered citizens, including women and men, under the eyes of inhabitants... The terrorists then gathered the bodies of the victims and put them in a mosque in Qadi Askar” district, the SANA news agency said.

It said the assailants had planned to blow up the mosque and then blame the attack on government forces.

State-run newspaper Tishrin said Tuesday's car bombing of a funeral in Damascus was an indication that the "terrorist" groups have reached "a very advanced stage of despair and bankruptcy."

The bombing hit Jaramana, a mainly Druze and Christian town on the southeastern outskirts of Damascus that the Observatory described as generally supportive of Assad's government.

Russia on Wednesday called for an impartial investigation into the latest "barbaric" violence in and around Damascus.

"We insist on a meticulous and impartial investigation into the circumstances of the latest tragic events" using the resources of the United Nations' newly opened office in Damascus, the Russian foreign ministry said.

It singled out the car bomb and the discovery of several hundred bodies near the Damascus suburb of Daraya on Sunday that the rebels charge was the result of a massacre by regime forces.

In violence nationwide on Wednesday, at least 101 people were killed, including 56 civilians, according to the Observatory, which says more than 25,000 people have been killed in the 17-month-long revolt.

Meanwhile, U.N. chief Ban Ki-moon held talks in Tehran with Iran's leaders including on the Syria conflict.

After meeting parliament speaker Ali Larijani, Iran's parliamentary news website quoted Ban as saying: "Iran can play an important role in solving the Syrian crisis peacefully."

Iran, the chief ally of Syria's regime, accuses the United States, Turkey, Saudi Arabia and Qatar of sustaining the revolt in Syria.

<http://english.alarabiya.net/articles/2012/08/29/235028.html>

7. ARABIAN PENINSULA AND THE GULF OF BASRA

- **Bahrain wants Iran apology over speech translation**

Iran's state television reportedly tampered with Egyptian President Mohammed Mursi during a Non-Aligned Movement summit in Tehran. (Reuters)

Iran's state television reportedly tampered with Egyptian President Mohammed Mursi during a Non-Aligned Movement summit in Tehran

Bahrain has demanded an apology from Iran after an official interpreter reportedly replaced the word "Syria" with "Bahrain" in a speech by Egypt's president at the opening of the Non-Aligned Movement in Tehran.

The foreign ministry in Manama on Saturday filed an "official protest memorandum" with Tehran's charge d'affaires over the "misrepresentation made by Iranian State Television" during President Mohamed Mursi's speech on Thursday.

Bahrain "requested the Iranian government apologize for this act, and take the necessary action to correct the breach and ensure that actions like this one don't happen again," the ministry's demarche said, according to a statement.

Mursi, in the first visit to the Islamic republic by an Egyptian head of state since the 1979 Islamic revolution, in his speech criticized the regime of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, a key regional ally of Tehran.



"The revolution in Egypt is the cornerstone for the Arab Spring, which started days after Tunisia and then it was followed by Libya and Yemen and now the revolution in Syria against its oppressive regime," Mursi told delegates at the summit, prompting a walk-out by the Syrian delegation.

Manama said that the interpreter on Iran's state television replaced the word Syria with Bahrain several times, although Mursi, who spoke in Arabic, did not mention Bahrain at all.

The Bahraini statement did not name the television channel that it said changed the

words, as several state channels transmitted Mursi's speech live, including two in Farsi: IRINN and Channel One.

IRINN broadcast the speech using the official interpretation of the summit, which clearly mentioned Syria, as verified by AFP.

Channel One used its own interpreter who may have substituted the word "Syria" with "Bahrain" in its broadcast, according to a video posted online by the Doha-based Al-Jazeera satellite news channel.

However, AFP on Sunday was unable to verify the authenticity of the video with Iranian television officials.

Relations between Tehran and Manama have been rocky over Iran's vocal criticism of Bahrain's deadly crackdown on Shiite-led protests last year.

<http://english.alarabiya.net/articles/2012/09/03/235791.html>

- **13 killed in a raid targeting two cars carrying al-Qaeda militant in central Yemen**

An air strike in central Yemen on Sunday killed 10 suspected al-Qaeda extremists and three women companions, but a militant leader escaped unharmed, a tribal chief said.

The raid that targeted two vehicles in the Radaa area "killed the guards of Abdulraouf al-Dahab and companions," said the tribal chief, adding that a rocket missed the car of Dahab, who is a local al-Qaeda leader.

The source said that the plane, which could have been an unmanned drone, fired two rockets. The first missed Dahab's car but the second hit the vehicle behind it, which transported the guards and women.

The attack took place around 4:00 pm (1300 GMT) on the road between the village of Hama and Dahab's village Manasseh, he said.



Other local and security sources confirmed the attack and the toll.

The United States is the only country that has drones in the region and in recent months has been carrying out strikes on al-Qaeda targets in the south and east of the country and in the Arabian Peninsula.

Dahab is the brother of Tarek al-Dahab, who led al-Qaeda fighters in a January raid in which they overran the town of Radaa, 130 kilometers (80 miles) southeast of Sanaa.

The militants abandoned the city later the same month, bowing to tribal pressure.

Tarek Dahab was killed in February.

Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, has taken advantage of the weakness of the central government during a year of protests against ousted president Ali Abdullah Saleh to expand their presence in the impoverished country.

<http://english.alarabiya.net/articles/2012/09/02/235695.html>

- **Kuwait's Global shareholders approve final debt restructuring plan**

Shareholders in Kuwait's Global Investment House approved on Sunday a final plan to create new special purpose vehicles that will carry the company's debt as part of the \$1.7 billion debt restructuring plan.



Global, which is undergoing its second debt restructuring in three years, will create at least two SPVs, one to hold company assets along with a debt of \$1.3 billion and one which will take part in a capital increase for the parent company and which will carry a debt equivalent of \$430 million, Managing Director Maha al-Ghunaim told a news conference.

“One special purpose vehicle is going to hold the assets from our balance sheet which will be moved to that company,” al-Ghunaim said.

“The other SPVs, one SPV or more that are going to be created, will participate in the capital increase of the company and it is going have a debt equivalent to 430 million dollars,” she added.

According to the plan, Global will offer 122.2 million dinars (\$433.64 million) of new shares to creditors, subject to creditor approval.

The shareholders meeting also agreed to write off losses worth 31.1 million dinars against Global’s current share premium and a further 77.1 million dinars from its existing paid-up capital.

Global, which counts the governments of Kuwait and Dubai as major shareholders, asked bank creditors in September to suspend payments on a 1.7 billion plan agreed in 2009.

<http://english.alarabiya.net/articles/2012/09/03/235785.html>

- **Gulf states lambaste Syria, Iran**

Arab monarchies in the Gulf on Sunday lambasted Syria's regime for deploying

heavy weapons against civilians while ordering Iran not to interfere in their internal affairs.

The six members of the Gulf Cooperation Council at a meeting in Jeddah also urged the international community to "assume their responsibilities and take measures to protect civilians" in Syria, where according to a watchdog more than 26,000 people have been killed in a revolt that erupted in March 2011.

The GCC in a statement issued after the meeting in the western Saudi city condemned "the ongoing massacres which are due to the obstinacy of the regime in using heavy weapons, including planes and tanks" against civilians.

The monarchies ordered Iran to halt its "interference" in their internal affairs, citing an incident at the opening of the Non-Aligned Movement in Tehran when an official interpreter reportedly replaced the word "Syria" with "Bahrain" in a speech by Egyptian President Mohamed Morsi.

They asked their powerful neighbor to "cease these acts and not resort to or threaten to use force."

Bahrain earlier issued a statement saying it had "requested the Iranian government apologize for this act, and take the necessary action to correct the breach and ensure that actions like this one don't happen again."

Relations between Tehran and Manama have been rocky over Iran's vocal criticism of Bahrain's deadly crackdown on Shiite-led protests last year.

There is no love lost either between Saudi Arabia and Iran, which has criticized Saudi military involvement in putting down the Bahrain protests for flooding the world market with its oil.

Oil-rich Saudi Arabia is a close US ally that supports the mostly Sunni rebels in Syria fighting to overthrow the regime of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, while Iran is Assad's biggest ally and has pledged him full support in his fight, though it denies providing him with soldiers or arms.

Tehran, however, accuses Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Turkey of arming and financing the Syrian rebels.

The GCC comprises Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates, Oman, Qatar and Kuwait.

<http://www.nowlebanon.com/Sub.aspx?ID=125478>

- **GCC calls on Lebanese to not involve country in Syrian crisis**

The foreign ministers of the Gulf Cooperation Council's six nations called Sunday on Lebanese people to not involve Lebanon in the Syrian crisis.

In a statement issued at the end of its regular meeting in Jeddah, the council underlined its support for Lebanon's "security, stability, sovereignty and unity," as it also called on all Lebanese factions to uphold "the national interest" and prevent any attempts aiming to "disrupt Lebanon's security and drag it into the Syrian crisis."

Lebanon's political scene is split between supporters of the regime of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, led by

Hezbollah, and the pro-Western March 14 camp.

The GCC also underscored the “importance of achieving peaceful power transition in Syria that would preserve [the country’s] security, stability and unity.”

The council condemned the continuing “killings and massacres [in Syria] due to the regime’s [increasing] use of heavy weapons.”

Furthermore, the GCC emphasized the need to make efforts in order to offer “all required types of support to the Syrian people and deliver urgent humanitarian aid.”

The members also welcomed the appointment of Lakhdar Brahimi as the new international peace envoy.

Veteran diplomat Brahimi was appointed to replace former UN secretary General Kofi Annan as the UN-Arab League envoy to Syria after Annan's six-point peace plan failed to stop the bloodshed in the country.

The GCC underscored the “importance of laying down a new strategy and clear plan that seeks to achieve a peaceful transition of power [in Syria].”

Moreover, the GCC condemned the way Egyptian President Mohamed Morsi’s speech at the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) summit in Tehran last Thursday was translated into Persian.

The council said that the statements were “twisted.”

In his speech to the summit of the Non-Aligned Movement, Morsi denounced the "oppressive regime" in Damascus, which he said had lost all legitimacy.

<http://www.nowlebanon.com/NewsArticleDetails.aspx?ID=432655#ixzz25OTOm7JR>

8. AFGHANISTAN - PAKISTAN

• Clinton Facing Deadline on Terrorist Designation for Haqqani

Hillary Clinton

Scott Stearns

VOA News

September 2, 2012

RAROTONGA, Cook Islands – U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton is facing a Congressional deadline for deciding whether the Pakistani Haqqani network meets the definition of a terrorist organization. Labeling the group as such may complicate Afghan reconciliation efforts and U.S. relations with Pakistan.

Secretary Clinton says she will meet the September 9 deadline to tell Congress whether the Haqqani group should be considered terrorists.

Several leaders of the al-Qaida- and Taliban-linked group are already subject to U.S. sanctions, but Congress wants the entire Haqqani network named a terrorist organization as it is now widely seen as the biggest threat to U.S. and allied forces in Afghanistan.

With the deadline approaching, there have been press reports of division within the Obama administration on the Haqqani question between those who see the terrorist designation as a show of strength and those who are more cautious about its regional impact.

Speaking to reporters in the Cook Islands, Secretary Clinton refused to comment on those reports, seeking instead to underscore what she says is steady U.S. pressure on the group.

"We are drying up their resources. We are targeting their military and intelligence personnel. We are pressing the Pakistanis to step up their own efforts. So we're already taking action, and we will have more to say about the specific request from the Congress next week," said Clinton.

The secretary of state is empowered to designate the group a terrorist organization if she determines that it is engaged in activities that threaten the security of the United States and its citizens.

Adding Haqqani to that list could slow efforts to negotiate an end to the Afghan conflict as it may be more difficult to include Haqqani leaders in a new government. There remain hopes that talks with the Taliban that were suspended in March could resume with the end of this year's Afghan fighting season.

Secretary Clinton says those are decisions for Afghans. She discussed the issue here in the Cook Islands with New Zealand Prime Minister John Key, who agrees that the question of negotiating with the Taliban or other groups is fundamentally a matter for Kabul.

"They will in the end have to try and find a way through what is a difficult situation and come to a conclusion of how that can best be handled. And I wouldn't be surprised if part of that attempt to deliver greater security in Afghanistan is some discussions, but that's ultimately a matter for President [Hamid] Karzai," said Key.

Secretary Clinton's decision on the Haqqani network could also affect relations with Pakistan as the group is believed to have close ties with elements of Pakistani intelligence services that are pushing for its inclusion in Afghan reconciliation efforts.

Months of sour relations between the United States and Pakistani are only just now easing with July's reopening of crucial military supply lines across the Afghan border that Pakistan closed following last

year's killing of 24 Pakistani troops in a U.S. air strike.

On a visit to Islamabad last month, U.S. Defense Secretary Leon Panetta said Pakistan's military will soon begin a long-awaited offensive in the North Waziristan border region, where the Haqqani network is based.

U.S. officials say a drone strike in Pakistan last week killed the day-to-day operations commander of the network, Badruddin Haqqani.

<http://www.aopnews.com/today.html>

- **US Special Forces Suspend Training of Afghans**

NATO struggles to stop attacks on international forces by Afghan colleagues

VOA News

September 2, 2012

The U.S. military in Afghanistan says it has temporarily halted the training of Afghan Local Police in order to redo the vetting of current members after a string of attacks by Afghan soldiers and police on their international allies.

Forty-five international troops have been killed in a wave of insider attacks in Afghanistan this year, throwing doubt on the ability of Afghan and coalition forces to live and work together during a key time in the transition to Afghan control of security. International forces are set to hand over responsibility for the country's security to Afghans by the end of 2014.

Colonel Thomas Collins, a spokesman for U.S. forces in Afghanistan, said Sunday in a statement the pause in training affects about 1,000 trainees of the Afghan Local Police.

Afghan Local Police forces that have already been trained will continue to operate.

A report in The Washington Post said the re-vetting process would affect more than 27,000 Afghan troops, including the Afghan National Army and the Afghan National Police.

The newspaper said Saturday the insider attacks had forced NATO officials to acknowledge what the Post called a "painful truth" -- that the killings might

have been prevented if existing security measures had been applied correctly.

U.S. forces in Afghanistan train the Afghan Local Police.

NATO is responsible for training recruits for the Afghan National Army and the Afghan National Police. NATO has not suspended its training.

The Washington Post report says many military guidelines were not adhered to by Afghans and Americans because they did not want to hinder the growth of the Afghan army and police.

Special Operations officials say the current vetting process is effective, but lacks a follow-up that would screen out Afghan troops who have fallen under the influence of the insurgency or who have grown disillusioned with the Afghan government.

<http://www.aopnews.com/today.html>

- **Security forces kill 3 militants in west Afghanistan**

Press TV

September 2, 2012

Violent clashes between Afghan security forces and Taliban have left at least three militants dead in western Afghanistan, Press TV reports.

Spokesman for Herat governor Mohideen Noori told Press TV that the attack happened early Sunday morning in Shindand city, situated in the southern part of the Herat Province.

The United States invaded Afghanistan in 2001 under the pretext of combating terrorism.

The offensive removed the Taliban from power, but years into the invasion, insecurity continues to rise across the country despite the presence of thousands of foreign troops in the war-weary nation.

The US-led war in Afghanistan, which has caused record-high civilian and military casualties, has become the longest military conflict in the American history.

<http://www.aopnews.com/today.html>

- **Afghans Terrorized By Border Shelling As Blame Game Goes On**

By Frud Bezhan, Rohullah Anwari

September 2, 2012

Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty

KUNAR PROVINCE, Afghanistan -- Abdul Karim was inside when the first rocket struck, killing nearly everyone in a neighboring mud-brick house.

Many more rockets followed, raining down on the village as Karim and others fled for safety in the nearby mountains. Within minutes, it was over, but it was only a sign of what was to come.

Since that day in late June, crossborder rocket and mortar fire has continued to pepper villages in Kunar and Nuristan provinces, located along Afghanistan's insurgent-ridden northeastern border with Pakistan. Nearly 3,200 attacks have been recorded across five districts in Kunar alone, according to the provincial government.

Kabul has accused the Pakistani Army of indiscriminately shelling Afghan villages in

order to further destabilize the already restive regions.

Islamabad, which denies the accusations, says its troops are responding to attacks by militants on the Afghan side of the border.

And while the blame game goes on, the rockets keep coming, adding to the misery of everyday residents. Tens of people have been left dead and thousands displaced already in the remote, mountainous provinces. Homes have been lost and dozens of schools closed. Forest fires caused by the shelling have destroyed crops and killed livestock.

'Situation Is Appalling'

Karim, who is from a remote village in Kunar Province, is among those who left for safe haven. But reality quickly set in when he and his wife and three children arrived at a makeshift camp some 50 kilometers from his village.

"A lot of people have come here and are lying on the ground. They have fled, thirsty and hungry, from their homes without anything," Karim says. "Their

crops and land have been destroyed. Those who stay are living in the rubble of their destroyed homes. The situation is appalling. Around 100 families have come to this camp alone."

The outcry has been fierce, with many locals enraged by the government's perceived inaction. Other Afghans have directed their anger at Pakistan, as was the case during protests in Kabul on August 30 in which pictures of Pakistani President Asif Ali Zardari were burned and participants chanted anti-Pakistan slogans.

Public discontent has already spurred Afghan lawmakers to take steps to oust the country's two most powerful security officials. In early August, Defense Minister Abdul Rahim Wardak and Interior Minister Bismullah Mohammadi were given a vote of no-confidence by parliament over alleged security failures, including the failure to stop the shelling of Afghan territory from Pakistan.

Afghan President Hamid Karzai and his Pakistani counterpart, meanwhile, have agreed to assign a joint military delegation to visit affected areas and to investigate who is responsible for the shelling.

'Our Children Are Being Killed'

But the moves have done little to appease those suffering from the violence.

Ajmal, from Kunar's Wanat district, says locals face a daunting decision -- stay and risk being killed or leave everything behind in the faint hope of a better future elsewhere.

"If they can't do anything to help, they should tell us so we know that we have to live," Ajmal says. "If they can't do anything, what can we ordinary people do? When children cry, they go to their parents."

Waliat Khan, from Kunar's border district of Dangam, takes a harder line, saying that if Kabul can't find a solution, locals will take matters into their own hands.

"They [the government] told us not to worry, but our children are being killed and we are losing everything we had," Khan says. "The government said everything will be OK, but they have ruined us [with their empty promises]."

We, the Afghan tribes, will deal with [Pakistan] ourselves."

Written by Frud Bezhan, with reporting from RFE/RL Radio Free Afghanistan's Rohullah Anwari

<http://www.aopnews.com/today.html>

- **Local Militia Kills Eight Afghan Civilians**

September 2, 2012

Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty

Pro-government militiamen in northern Afghanistan have shot dead at least eight civilians after mistakenly blaming villagers for a Taliban attack.

Officials in Kunduz Province say a local militia commander and 20 fighters launched the assault in the village of Kunum after the Taliban on September 1 killed two men, including a militia fighter, and dumped their bodies in Kunum.

Officials said as many as 10 civilians might have been killed and eight injured in the attack but could not say whether women or children were among those affected.

Local militias, or "arbakis," were formed by the central government and NATO to combat the Taliban in remote areas.

Based on reporting by AFP and dpa

<http://www.aopnews.com/today.html>

This media summary is prepared by **ORSAM Middle East Research Assistants Nebahat Tanrıverdi O and Selen Tonkuş. It covers news and commentaries as reported by the national media sources publishing in the Middle Eastern countries. The views expressed are not those of ORSAM and their inclusion does not imply factual accuracy.*

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